



PHD

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NARRATIVES OF AN ORGANIZATION'S IDENTITIES

Matthew James

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Bath
School of Management

December 2012

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Matthew James

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores narratives constructed by participants about an organization's identities. I examine how identity-relevant statements were deployed as exercises in power, serving to legitimize and promote their authors. Framed within an interpretive paradigm, the research adopts reflexive approaches to consider participants' understandings. I draw on organizational identity theory and empirical studies to explore the multiplicity and conflicting nature of identity in organizations. Literatures on organizational narratives, storytelling and power are also considered.

The ethnography is set in a public sector organization in which I worked: the Personal Accounts Delivery Authority (PADA). Its role was to deliver the Government's reforms to private pension provision in the UK; the reforms came into force in October 2012. The narrative data constructing the research were collected through semi-structured interviews with 60 members of the organization, transcripts of organizational events and a diary I recorded for a year. These data are augmented by a series of vignettes that weave in accounts of my experiences while working for and researching PADA. The analysis of narrative data is constructed in three chapters, each of which explores identity-relevant narratives from different perspectives. The first analysis chapter examines narrative data through five concepts: reflexivity, voice, plurivocity, temporality and fictionality. The second analyses identity narratives in two organizational events and the third explores my understandings of the organization's identities from an autoethnographic perspective. The discussion chapter provides three readings that interpret the data through different lenses: narrative and storytelling, organizational identity and autoethnographic perspectives. I then make concluding remarks, including ideas for future research and the contribution of my research to the study of organizational identity.

The primary contribution of the ethnography is to scholarship at the intersection of identity and power in organizations and specifically how identity-relevant narratives are deployed as exercises in power by participants. There are also contributions to narrative research methods, including the value of researching identity ethnographically. Additionally, I suggest practical contributions to literature on understanding issues of culture and sense-making in public bodies and how employees from different sector backgrounds (public and private) interact within a public sector context to deliver government reforms.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The ship on which Theseus ... returned in safety ... was preserved by the Athenians. They took away the old timbers from time to time, and put new ... ones in their places, so that the vessel became a standing illustration for the philosophers in the ... question of growth, some declaring that it remained the same, others that it was not the same vessel.

(Plutarch 1914, p.49)

1.1 Statement of intent

This thesis explores identity-relevant narratives constructed by participants about their organization. I focus on conflicting linguistic understandings of the organization's identities and how these were deployed as exercises in power, promoting and legitimizing their authors. Set within an interpretive paradigm, my research seeks to contribute to literature on organizational identity, power and narrative.

Identity has surfaced as a consuming postmodern agenda (Benhabib 1992; Besley 1980; Brown 2001; Callero 2003): as Knights (2004) argues, 'in relation to notions of the self, contemporary preoccupations have moved ... to ... identity' (p.19). While psychologists and philosophers have long been absorbed in studying individuals' identity (e.g. Erikson 1968; McAdams 1997; Mead 1934; Ricoeur 1985), identity in organizations has only comparatively recently become a pursuit of management research. Over the last three decades, a richly diverse scholarship has spawned from Albert and Whetten's (1985) seminal conception of organizational identity. For Albert and Whetten, a statement of a collective's identity emphasizes central characteristics of the organization, its distinguishing features and those that endure; such statements, they argued, would be understood consistently among members of the organization. While this theorization is regarded as the contemporary point of origin for the field,

many studies have tendered definitional challenges, leading to a profusion of understandings (e.g. Academy of Management Review 2000a; Gioia 1998). Additionally, research perspectives such as functionalist (Brun 2002; Olins 1989), interpretive (Dutton & Dukerich 1991; Glynn 2000; Scott & Lane 2000a), postmodern (Coupland & Brown 2004; Humphreys & Brown 2002a) and psychodynamic (Brown & Starkey 2000; Diamond 1993) have enriched the field. My exploration of identity-relevant narratives seeks to contribute to this literature by arguing that members' understandings of their organization's identities are far from homogeneous and uniform; rather, different understandings contest for primacy (Gioia & Thomas 1996; Pratt & Foreman 2000).

Some organizational scholars researching discourse and narrative conceptualize organizations as discursive spaces (e.g. Brown & Humphreys 2006; Brown *et al.* 2005; Chreim 2007; Fletcher *et al.* 2005; Kornberger *et al.* 2006). As Boje (1995) argues, 'organizations can be theorized as simultaneous discourses' (p.1029). Such understandings suggest an organization's identities are constructed in and by language (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Boyce 1996; Chreim 2005; Humphreys & Brown 2002a; Schultz & Hernes 2012) and are constituted by the totality of narratives members tell one another, or author in publications, corporate documents and websites (Brown 2006; Sillince & Brown 2009). Research on identity-relevant narratives, in particular, has suggested members' understandings of their organization's identities are heterogeneous and conflicting. Indeed, some scholars promote the idea that identity statements are reflexive, multi-voiced, plurivocal, fictional constructs that change over time (Brown 2006). Additionally, identity-relevant narratives are deployed as exercises in power that compete (Chreim 2007; Foucault 1977; Humphreys & Brown 2002a;

Rhodes 2001) to secure their author's legitimacy and position (Brown 1997; Mumby 1988). As Brown *et al.* (2005) contend, 'identities of organizations are constituted by the multiple, changing, occasionally consonant, sometimes overlapping, but often competing narratives centred on them, authored by those who participate in them' (p.314) (see also Cooren 1999; Harrison 2000). My research seeks to contribute explicitly to these understandings.

Aligned to my narrative approach, this research draws from authors in other disciplines, such as Bruner (1991), McAdams *et al.* (2006) and Ricoeur (1991), who have developed the notion of a narrated identity. This suggests 'people arrive at an understanding of themselves and the world through narratives' (Gates 1995, p.57) (see also Polkinghorne, 1988). For Ricoeur (1991), a narrated identity is established when individuals weave historical, present and future events into a plot; as a result, sense is made of the present and identity. From this perspective, a narrative identity is neither a coherent series of events, nor a monolithic construct, but one that continuously evolves. While this conception focuses primarily on individuals' capabilities to narrate identities of themselves, scholars employ the concept to analyse how identity claims are embedded in the narratives people tell one another about what they believe is central, distinctive and enduring about their organization (e.g. Brown & Humphreys 2006; Humphreys & Brown 2002a). It is how and why such understandings were deployed as exercises in power in a particular organization that forms the core of this thesis.

My research seeks to contribute to scholarship at the intersection of literatures on identity and power in organizations and, specifically, how the participants in my study

deployed identity-relevant narratives as exercises in power to legitimize and promote their understandings of the organization's identities. In Chapter 9, Conclusions, I argue two further contributions from my research: firstly, that made to the methodology of studying organizational identity *in situ*, and the value that this unique perspective can offer researchers of organization; secondly, practical contributions to the management of public sector organizations currently dealing with substantial change as a consequence of budget constraints arising from the economic climate in the UK.

1.2 Overview of methodology

I frame my research within an interpretive paradigm and consonantly commit to relativist ontological and subjective epistemological assumptions (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Kuhn 1970). I adopted qualitative methods to conduct the study and decided not to triangulate narrative data with quantitative approaches (although I recognize this may have been possible). Instead, I took Morgan and Smircich's (1980) advice to 'investigate from within the subject of study and employ ... techniques appropriate to that task' (p.498).

Participants' narratives form the data for my exploration of organizational identities and power. As identity-relevant narratives are created *in vivo*, I adopted an approach that I believed allowed me to be closest to their 'point of origin': an organizational ethnography (Boje 1991a; Calas & Smircich 1993; Gabriel 2000; Van Maanen 1979a, p.540). As Boje (1995) argues, 'the advantage of observing in situ ... is that a researcher can ... peek beneath the managerial ... stories and look at the storytelling organization processes' (p.1030). This enabled a deeper experience of identity claims authored by the participants in my study: 'the people doing the mapping are closest to

the terrain which means they are the ones ... creating a local narrative' (Colville *et al.* 1999, p.142). In addition to the narratives captured from participants, I also explore my own identity claims in the thesis (Ellis & Bochner 1996; Sanday 1979); this presented an opportunity to test Rosen's (1991) assertion that 'ethnographers study others to find out more about ... themselves' (p.2) and question 'established assumptions [to bring] power relations into view' (Vince 2002a, p.74). To aid this reflexive approach, I weave-in vignettes to provide personal reflections of my experiences while I conducted the research. These seek to enrich my ethnography and I deploy them as 'a brief portrayal that captures an important slice of what [I] learned' (Ely 2007, p.585) and experienced during my work and research routines (Boyle & Parry 2007; Coffey 1999; Erikson 1968; Hughes 1998; Humphreys 2005).

Vignette: "... I beg your pardon?"

Date and time: 18 August 2006 (just after 8 p.m.). Location: my living room.

"I beg your pardon? I beg your bloody pardon?" exclaimed my wife, Emma. "You want to do what? A P. H. chuffing D – what on earth for? You've only just completed a Master's in business ad-bloody-ministration..." Silence ... followed by further sounds of exasperation, then the slamming down of her hands by her side, followed by Emma storming out of the room, saying "I give in" (in a tone that suggested she hadn't).

On reflection it wasn't the optimum time to embark on a research degree. Our second child was a baby (there was talk of more!). Additionally, work was hectic: I had become involved in a new project that was taking up a lot of time.

So why a PhD in organization? Of course, narcissism¹, egotism and vanity play their part. And part of this is the thought that someone, like me, fascinated and frustrated by an organization, may flick through the pages of this thesis and be inspired to write too. But egotism is not all that drove me (albeit that I have only recently been able to articulate this). Like breathing, my life, my entire existence, is spent in organization: processing organization, in 'organizations' at work, at home, within my gender, class and culture, on the tube, within my internal soliloquy, and in my dreams too, I suspect. Organization is my fundamental human condition.

So, I've written this thesis for at least one 'other', who might feel a need to write about the mechanism that is the principal constraining condition of my human existence.

¹ Albeit as Harrison (2000, p.442) states, 'narcissism suggests a sense of ... insecurity', and others 'a need to maintain a positive sense of self' (Brown 1997, p.645; Buhrmester *et al.* 2011; Routledge *et al.* 2012).

1.2.1 Organization of the study

My ethnography was conducted within a small UK public sector organization: the Personal Accounts Delivery Authority (PADA). PADA was established by an Act of Parliament in July 2007 (HMT 2007) and was ‘wound up’ in July 2010: it was replaced, amicably and due to legal necessity, by the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST). The organization was set up to tackle the problem of persistent retirement under-saving by millions of low-middle income employees in the UK. Its role was to design, procure and implement a new private pension scheme, known initially as Personal Accounts, to enable those on modest incomes to save for their retirement. The scheme commenced operations in October 2012, when legislation (HMT 2008) required all UK employers to implement auto-enrolment² of their employees in a private sector pension scheme, one of which would be run by NEST.

I worked in the organization from when it was established to 1 May 2010, although I had worked in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for a year before the creation of PADA on the programme that created the framework for the organization. Throughout this period I was the head of procurement for the project: my primary activity was preparing for and then leading the competition to select a private sector administrator to run the new pension scheme and agreeing a multi-million pound contract with the winner.

1.2.2 Ethical considerations

Given my research focuses on individuals’ perceptions of the organization by which they were employed, it was important to be transparent with participants about my

² Defined by www.nestfacts.co.uk: Auto-enrolment means that from October 2012 most UK ‘employees will automatically be entered into a pension scheme [by their employer] without having to complete an application form or sign any forms’.

research intent and commit to keep data confidential. Before I started collecting narratives I gained permission from PADA's management team to research the organization; at a practical level, I made it clear how I would separate my role as an employee of the organization and academic observer. Permission was granted without conditions. Additionally, prior to each interview, I wrote to participants explaining the nature of my study and made sure, given my position, that I did not pressure junior members of the organization to take part in the research. Immediately before each interview I explained my research intent and described the format of the session. I also informed interviewees that I intended to use their first name in the thesis, but not their surname; all confirmed their acceptance. I offered participants a copy of their interview transcript and committed that audio recordings would remain secure.

1.3 Structure of thesis

My thesis is structured in nine chapters. I start each with a quotation: some relate directly to the chapter's subject, others inspired me and a few, such as the one heading this chapter, I comment upon within the thesis. Following this introduction, chapter 2 reviews the literature pertinent to my study of organizational identity narratives. The review has three sections. The first discusses the linguistic turn in which my thesis is framed and the fields of organizational discourse and narrative. Consonant with my research intent to explore identity claims as exercises in power, I also discuss the literature on power, hegemony and organizations, with a particular focus on how this is exercised through discourse and narrative. Secondly, I review scholars' conceptions of organizational identity and provide an overview of definitions and different theoretical lenses through which issues of identity have been studied. I follow this with a review of key themes in the organizational identity literature: identification, multiplicity,

stability, image and metaphor. The final section brings the first two together to explore scholars' understandings of a narrated identity. Chapter 3 describes the methods I followed to construct my research. I outline the choices made, including adopting an interpretive approach and my epistemological and ontological commitments. I describe how I conducted my ethnography and how I collected narratives, through interviews, transcriptions of events and a diary. Chapter 4 describes PADA. I highlight the context in which it operated, why it was established and how we organized.

Chapters 5–7 analyse the identity-relevant narratives I collected, including my own. In chapter 5, I employ Brown's (2006) framework and explore identity-related narratives through notions of reflexivity, voice, plurivocity, temporality and fictionality. Chapter 6 investigates PADA's identities through two key organizational events: an industry day and our move to new offices. Through these events I analyse how power and ideology were exercised in the participants' claims about PADA's identities. The final analysis chapter explores my own understandings through stories of working in PADA.

In chapter 8 I articulate three readings of my analysis. The first is from a narrative and storytelling perspective, which I follow with a reading from an organizational identity lens, and finally, I provide an autoethnographic reading. The concluding chapter discusses my journey over the 6 years of conducting my research, after which I suggest the contribution of my work to the field of organizational identity and highlight studies others may seek to pursue. I close with a vignette describing final thoughts.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.

(Barthes 1977, p.146)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literatures pertinent to my exploration of participants' understandings of PADA's identities and how they were deployed as exercises in power. The review has main three sections. In the first (2.2), I discuss the linguistic turn and research on discourse, narrative, power and hegemony in organization studies. Section 2.3 explores scholarship on organizational identity: including definitions, approaches and themes in the literature. The final section (2.4) discusses literatures on the narration of identities, at both the individual and organizational level, before conclusions from my review are drawn.

2.2 Language, discourse, narrative and power in organization studies

This section outlines my review of literatures on discourse, narrative and power in organization studies and what these owe to other disciplines. The section is in seven parts: I provide overviews of the turn to language and organizational discourse, followed by detailed reviews of literatures in organizational narratives and power – scholarship to which my thesis seeks to contribute directly.

2.2.1 The turn to language

Pentland (1999, p.711) argues that 'good stories are central to building theory' and with others suggests that theory developed in this way can be more persuasive,

remembered for longer and understood more deeply than that which is not (e.g. Clegg 1993; Dyer & Wilkins 1991; Gabriel 2000; Martin & Powers 1983; Rhodes & Brown 2005; cf. Eisenhardt 1989, 1991). These arguments are set within the context of the considerable attention social scientists have paid to language within their fields of scholarship (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000b; Rabinow & Sullivan 1987; Reason & Torbet 2001). As Alvesson and Kärreman (2000b) describe it, the linguistic turn, a movement that originated in philosophy (Rorty 1967, 1991), is a profound contemporary trend in the arts and social sciences. Indeed, the focus on language and its 'role in constructing, rather than mirroring reality' is now well established as a philosophical lens and methodological approach within the social sciences (Chreim 2005, p.568). While many argue this to be case, Deetz (2003) warns that the 'central 'turn' issues of how different worlds emerge, the power relations in this emergence and the mechanisms of protection' (p.425) have been lost. In the following sections, I discuss how the turn to language in studies of organization has enabled fields of academic exploration in discourse and narrative.

2.2.2 The field of organizational discourse

Discourse has emerged as an important field of organizational research (Heracleous 2006; Iedema & Wodak 1999). While some scholars (e.g. Grant *et al.* 2004) argue that the term 'organizational discourse' is often defined poorly, I found Potter and Wetherell's (1987) description useful, scoping it as 'all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds' (p.7). Grant *et al.* (2004) refine this definition, suggesting that organizational discourse is the 'structured collections of texts embodied in the practices of talking and writing that bring organizationally related objects into being, as these texts are produced, disseminated and consumed'

(p.3). Central to this agenda is the theory of social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Searle 1995) and predicated on this, theorists have suggested that organizations exist in as much as members create and recreate them through discourse (Iedema & Wodak 1999; Marshak & Grant 2008; Mumby & Clair 1997). Moreover, symbols, such as myths and stories, are important articulations of organizational reality and culture (Mumby 1988; Wilkins 1983). There is also an important body of work that emphasizes organization as an interactive accomplishment achieved through discourse (Fairclough 2005), described by Tsoukas and Chia (2002) as ‘organizational becoming’, where organization is continuously realized by an evolving and changing discourse.

Heracleous (2006) identified three approaches in the field of organizational discourse: interpretive, functional and critical. From an interpretive approach, discourse is understood as a communicative action (Mumby & Mease 2011). Functional approaches conceptualize discourse as a tool used by participants to ensure organizational actions are conducted and critical scholars link discourse to organizations using notions of power, reflexivity and domination. This perspective was informed by poststructuralist and postmodernist writers such as Derrida (1999), Foucault (1980) and Lyotard (1984). However, scholars stress no single research methodology is preferable and many advocate multiplicity and diversity in approach (e.g. Broadfoot *et al.* 2004; Grant *et al.* 1998; Heracleous 2006).

2.2.3 Antecedents to studies of narratives in organizations

The development of organizational discourse scholarship suggests four key domains of exploration: (i) conversation and dialogue, (ii) narratives and stories, (iii) rhetoric

and (iv) tropes (Grant *et al.* 2004). My research seeks to contribute to scholarship in narrative and storytelling in organizations and I explore this literature in 2.2.5 below. In this section, I discuss narrative research in various disciplines that have influenced organizational scholars.

While narratives have been defined in many ways, McQuillan (2000) suggests they are ‘linguistic constructs’ that are constituted by ‘any minimal linguistic (written or verbal) act’ (p.7). Others, such as Brooks (1984), view narrative as ‘[n]ot a matter of typology or of fixed structures, but rather a structuring operation peculiar to those messages that are developed through temporal succession, the instrumental logic of a specific mode of human understanding’ (p.10). This definition, in particular, suggests links between narrative and time, alluding to narrative as a cognitive process used by authors to construct reality (Berger & Luckmann 1966). It also suggests the potential multiplicity of narratives given the absence of fixed structures.

Narrative research methods have been prevalent for some time in various fields in the social sciences, such as: history (Carr 1986; Somers 1992), communication (Cooren 1999; Fenton & Langley 2011; Fisher 1984, 1988), political science (Patterson & Monroe 1998), literary philosophy (Ricoeur 1983, 1985, 1988, 1991), literary theory (Currie 1998) and social psychology (Bruner 1990, 1991; Polkinghorne 1988; Rappaport 2000; Sarbin 1986). In the field of communication studies, Fisher (1984) conceptualized humans as narrators interpreting stories from their experience, culture and relationships with others. Through his metanarrative paradigm, Fisher (1988) provides valuable insight into how people relate to narratives based on their own life stories and what they believe to be true. Aligned with this perspective, Bruner (1990,

1991) argued that narrative is the primary way in which humans organize experiences and understand their reality. Polkinghorne (1988) viewed narrative as a ‘fundamental scheme ... linking individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite’ (p.13) and Ricoeur (1983), whose investigation of language was structured by narrative, argued that time becomes meaningful to individuals through narratives.

Within literary theory, Lyotard (1984) suggested that narratives ‘define what has the right to be said and done in the culture in question, and since they are part of that culture, they are legitimated by the simple fact that they do what they do’ (p.23). Currie (1998) developed this, describing the ‘extended scope and continuing vitality of a narratology in the process of transforming into something much bigger than it was’ (p.1). He suggested three themes which summarize the literary study of narrative research over recent years:

- i) diversification emphasizes narrative as an invention that may be understood in infinite ways;
- ii) deconstruction questions the scientific authority of narrative;
- iii) politicization focuses on how ideology is promulgated through narrative.

Such theoretical developments have influenced management studies and I explore politicization explicitly in chapter 6.

2.2.4 Defining organizational narrative and story

In everyday discourse it is not uncommon for the words ‘narrative’ and ‘story’ to be used interchangeably (McQuillan 2000); however, scholars who study these concepts in organizations have suggested they may be different. For Gabriel (2004), narratives

are ‘temporal *chains* of interrelated events or actions undertaken by characters’ (p.63, emphasis in the original) and that key to their structure is the sequencing of events over time (Polkinghorne 1988; Ricoeur 1983; Weick 1985). He describes stories as types of narratives that have tightly defined plots and ‘seminal ambiguity’ (Gabriel 2004, p.64), in which characters and events may be real or imagined; he also suggests the rarity of stories in organizations (Gabriel 2000, 2003). Czarniawska (1998), too, defines organizational stories as consisting principally of plot, suggesting that stories can be seen as ‘comprising causally related episodes that culminate in a solution to a problem’ (Czarniawska 1997, p.78) and where there is a clear chronological structure with a beginning and end. Unlike Gabriel, however, her use of the words ‘narrative’ and ‘story’ is often interchangeable (1998); this is an approach adopted by others (e.g. Currie & Brown 2003).

Boje (1991a), in contrast, suggests storytelling is the ‘institutional meaning system of the organization’ (p.106) and describes the terse and fragmented nature of stories, advising against narrow structural understandings of them as constituted by a beginning, middle and end (Boje 2006). Organizational stories, for him, are frequently ‘fragmented and multi-layered experiences of desire’ (Boje 2001, p.2). He describes this non-linear, unplotted and improper storytelling as *antenarrative* (Boje 2001). Such constructs exist before the ‘proper’ narrative, which for him is constructed principally around plot. His description of organizational storytelling as fragmented and multi-layered also emphasizes the polyphonic nature of story. This conception follows Barthes’ (1977) views on text that I quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

2.2.5 Approaches to the study of organizational narratives

In evaluating organizational narrative research, Hansen (2006) suggests that '[n]arrative analysis is a search for meaning, not truth' (p.1050), a theme central to Rhodes and Brown's (2005) story of the literatures on organizational narrative. For these scholars, organizational narratives are particularly valuable in providing insights into why people act and think the way they do, affording data that others argue are unavailable from alternative methodological approaches (Stutts & Barker 1999).

The use of narrative as a methodological approach (Boje 2001) and theoretical lens (Pentland 1999) to explore organizations has received significant recent attention (Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Lieblich *et al.* 1998; Mumby 2003; Phillips 1995; Rhodes & Brown 2005). There is research into how narratives serve to socialize new members within an organization (Louis 1980, 1983; Witten 1993), support decision-making (Milne & Chan 1999; O'Connor 1997) and understand consumer behaviour during marketing campaigns (Chronis *et al.* 2012; Stern *et al.* 1998). There has been research exploring how narratives indicate levels of emotion in the workplace (Boudens 2005), how shared meaning is established among organizational members (Boyce 1995; McWhinney & Battista 1988; Mitroff & Kilmann 1976; Smircich 1983), and how projects are implemented (Brown 1998a). Narrative research has focused on stories as management development and problem-solving tools (Mitroff & Kilmann 1975; Morgan & Dennehy 1997) and as systems for supporting the formulation of strategy (Barry & Elmes 1997). Others emphasize the value of story in understanding and intervening in the cultures of organizations (Boyce 1996, 1995; Hansen & Kahnweiler 1993; Myrziades 1987; Wilkins 1983). Boyce (1996), in particular, makes

the link between these two concepts, suggesting ‘story and storytelling clearly express organizational culture’ (p.21).

Narrative has also been seen as an important tool in considering organizational change (Barry 1997; Beech 2000; Boje 1991b; Buchanan & Dawson 2007; Feldman 2000) and as a way of exploring organizational sensemaking (Bruner 1991; Boje 1995; Gephart 1991; Weick 1985). The literature on narrative and sensemaking is itself diverse. Scholars have focused on how stories assist in sensemaking during periods of change (Boje 1991b; Brown & Humphreys 2003; Dunford & Jones 2000; Fleming 2001), team sensemaking (Patriotta 2003), collective group sensemaking (Berry 2001; cf. Boyce 1990) and how individuals and groups make sense in crises (Brown 2000, 2004; Gephart 1993).

2.2.6 Defining issues in organizational narrative research

Boje’s ethnographic studies (e.g. 1991a, 1995) demonstrate the value of conducting research *in situ*: putatively from this perspective meaning and interpretation of stories can more effectively be achieved (Boje 1991a, p.109; cf. Wilkins 1983) and plasticity of stories observed (Rhodes & Brown 2005). Boje’s (1991a, 1995) work collecting stories at source encouraged a wealth of further ethnographic research (e.g. Boje 1999; Brown 1998a; Currie & Brown 2003; Czarniawski 1997; Gabriel 2000). Indeed, Gabriel’s (2000) longitudinal collection of stories in organizations led to a theory of organizational storytelling that suggests ‘stories open valuable windows into the emotional, political and symbolic lives of organizations, offering researchers a powerful instrument for carrying out research’ (p.2). A further implication of research undertaken from ‘within’ was to bring to the surface the issue of a scholar’s role in

their study; the orientation of the author has implications for how stories are captured, recorded and retold (Barthes 1977; Boje *et al.* 1999; Boyce 1996; Gabriel 2000); as Rhodes and Brown (2005) remark, to ‘author a story is always a creative act’ (p.167). These ideas are central to my research.

A further theme within the literatures is the putatively polyphonic nature of organizations (Gergen & Whitney 1996; Hazen 1993; Kornberger *et al.* 2006; Rhodes 2001). This suggests organizations may be understood as socially constituted verbal systems, as stories, discourses and texts (Hazen 1993). Alternatively, they may be regarded, as Boje (1991a, 1995) argues, as collective storytelling systems. Postmodern organizational studies directly acknowledge and describe organizations explicitly as polyphonic entities, where narratives are told and retold differently by individuals and groups depending on who is telling and listening. Empirical studies (e.g. Boyce 1995; Brown 1998a; Brown & Humphreys 2006; Currie & Brown 2003; Humphreys & Brown 2002a) offer sources of evidence that suggest different versions of stories are recounted by groups within the same organization (Brown 2006). As Hazen (1993) suggests, organizations conceptualized as socially constituted verbal systems imply that they are sites of plurivocality (Glynn *et al.* 2000), where certain voices become louder and more powerful than others. Consonant with this, Rhodes (2001) developed the concept of the heteroglossic organization. For Rhodes (2002), organizations are constituted by competing centrifugal and centripetal forces that collide linguistically: ‘the centrifugal force of heteroglossia opposes the centralizing imposition of the monological world through multi-vocal discourse’ (p.107). This is an important theme in this thesis.

2.2.7 Dynamics of power and hegemony in discourse and narrative

Some researchers view organizations as sites of political activity (Pfeffer 1981) where groups and individuals serve their own interests by fixing meaning to events and actions (Deetz 1982, 1992; Mumby & Clair 1997). Power has always been integral to organizational studies (see Clegg *et al.* 2006), although exploring it from discursive and narratological perspectives, as I do in this thesis, provides a useful alternative avenue for research (Hardy & Phillips 2003; Rhodes & Brown 2005). This section provides an overview of the social science literature on power before discussing literature focused on power within organizations. I follow this with a discussion of the concept of hegemony and its application in organization studies.

Conceptions of power

Haugaard (2002) describes the array of perspectives on power as bewildering and argues this reflects the complexity of the concept. There are, however, two major discernible perspectives on power that have been explored by social scientists: a functionalist/behaviourist perspective and a radical structuralist conception. These are briefly discussed below, before other approaches pertinent to my research.

The functionalist/behaviourist approach conceives of power as a capacity possessed by individuals, where a person has power over another to the extent that the weaker individual's actions can be determined by the other (Bachrach & Baratz 1962; Dahl 1957; Weber 1947). Through such a lens, power is considered a commodity (Kotter 1979), harnessed by individuals and groups (Korda 1975) and achieved, some have argued, through the control of resources (Kanter 1979; Pfeffer 1977). The approach focuses on the intentions of individuals and how they show authority through their

behaviour. Radical/structuralist conceptions view power as a ‘multiplicity of practices for the production and regulation of subjectivity’ (Miller 1987, p.10). Central to these understandings is Giddens’ (1976, 1979, 1981) theory of structuration that suggests power is exercised through structures and systems, and theorists, such as Lukes (1974), who suggest power shapes the thoughts of others.

While these two conceptions of power have had an important influence on organizational scientists, so too have philosophical ideas on power, such as those of Michel Foucault. Foucault emphasized how power is exercised rather than possessed by individuals (1977), that it is not simply repressive but can be positive and productive (1980), that power is inextricably linked to knowledge, and (most pertinent to my exploration) that power functions through discourse and the deployment of political technologies (1980). As Dixon (2007) argues, Foucault’s interests lie in the micro processes of power and how these are manifested in discursive practices. With this in mind, I discuss next how power has been explored through organizational discourse and narrative.

Organizational discourse and power

Taking a critical perspective, organizational researchers have explored power by analysing discourse and narratives in organizations. Following Foucault, Clegg (1993) argues that even though power can be understood discursively, researchers should ‘focus on not only the language of power but also the power of the language of power’ (p.40). Language is not only important in the exercise of power to legitimize organizational routines and action, but serves to engender support for the decisions that are reached (Pfeffer 1981). Hardy and Phillips (2003) argue that power and discourse

are mutually constitutive and that the way in which power is distributed in organizations, the extent to which it can be deployed, as well as which actors have it, is constructed by language and is only temporarily fixed and often contested (Mumby 2003).

In his ethnography of a manufacturing environment, De Cock (1998) noted that organizational members not only secured their right to speak but in doing so ‘challenge[d] power relations’ (p.2). This observation, supported by others (e.g. Deetz & Mumby, 1985; Mumby 1987, 1998; Mumby & Stohl 1991; Phillips & Hardy 1997; Phillips *et al.* 2004), suggests discourse both reproduces and transforms power relations in organizations. Indeed, Mumby (1988) argues that discourse is not politically neutral but acts as a means by which certain power structures and social relations in an organization are produced, maintained and reproduced. Others (e.g. Mumby & Stohl 1991) suggest that discourse functions like a discipline, within a particular power-knowledge regime that controls the way organizational members behave and is both constraining and liberating. How discourse was used to maintain and reproduce relations of power in PADA and the reasons why participants sought to maintain power are central to my thesis.

A further theme explored within this literature is how organizational discourse establishes and perpetuates ideology within organizations (Deetz & Mumby 1985; Mumby 1987; Scheibel 1996). Mumby’s (1987) vignette of a conversation between a woman security officer and a male chairman of IBM demonstrates this. In the story, the security officer prevented the chairman and his colleagues from entering a part of the building as they did not have the appropriate security badges. While, as a result of

the discourse between the guard and the group, the chairman waited until badges were provided before entering the area, it is the horror of his colleagues at the guard's affront to the chairman's authority that is interesting. The ideology of the company made it inconceivable for a junior woman employee to challenge senior male managers. Ideology was reproduced and maintained through discourse both in the narrative itself and how it was subsequently retold in the organization and, of course, in academic journals. The story also serves to support Mumby's (2003) assertion that 'discourse, as a social practice, does ideological work that shapes social actors' relationships to the world in ways that are not always apparent to the social actors themselves' (p.238). This is a key theme I take up in chapter 6.

Organizational narrative and power

Researchers have also explored how power is exercised through narrative (e.g. Czarniawska 1998; Fleming 2001; Mumby 1987; Witten 1993). Mumby (2003) suggests that organizational 'narratives are inherently political' and act as discursive devices of control and strategies of resistance by organizational members (p.244). For others (e.g. Fleming & Spicer 2007; Westwood & Linstead 2001), organizational narratives are mechanisms through which the struggle for power is waged and strategies of domination are achieved. An analysis of political activity by Cobb and Rifkin (1991) and Cobb (1993) suggests that power-suffused narratives that are earliest and most coherently promoted tend to prevail, whereas those formulated later become marginalized and resisted. The literature suggests narratives are powerful devices for establishing and promulgating an organization's reality that become 'relatively complete, stable, and [often] removed from scrutiny' (Mumby 1998, p.125). Such

narratives serve as legitimizing tools that produce a 'certain way of perceiving the world, which privileges certain interests over others' (Mumby 1987, p.114).

The view that narratives generate belief (Wilkins 1983) and in so doing legitimize relations of power within organizations (Martin & Power 1983; Mumby 1987) has been explored by research that theorizes narratives as tools for maintaining organizational obedience (Witten 1993). Witten's narrative of a consultant dismissed after he acted contrary to a senior member of staff is interesting in demonstrating how recounted narratives reinforce and perpetuate social power relations and ideology within an organization. As she argues, the power of narratives is their ability to establish 'truth claims' that are memorable.

A further theme in the literature focuses on the performative nature of narrative (Boje 1991a; Goffman 1959a). Indeed, some researchers (e.g. Ewick & Silbey 1995) argue that narratives should not only be seen against the backdrop of their social context but as social practices themselves, namely as performances (Mumby 2003) suffused with political significance, dominant cultural meaning and relations of power. O'Connor (2000) suggests that narratives be viewed as performances too, within complex discursive situations that both enable and constrain human communicative praxis. Ethnographic research studies which I found valuable to illustrate this theme were Brown and Jones' (1998) investigation of the implementation of an IT system and Scheibel's (1998) research in a medical school. In Brown and Jones' (1998) study, the narratives told by groups within an organization competed as they presented accounts of their cohort's work that protected their group's interests over others. In this case, involving an unsuccessful implementation project, groups attributed failure of the work

to other cohorts in the organization and to external sources; through such narrative performances cohorts sought to exonerate themselves through statements of ‘inevitability’ and thoughts of ‘conspiracy’.

Organizational narrative and hegemony

Researchers have adopted Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony to explore organizations and processes of organizing³. Clegg (1989) suggests hegemony can be understood as ‘the successful mobilization and reproduction of active consent of dominated groups’ (p.160). For Mumby and Stohl (1991) it involves a dialectical relation between groups with the outcome of the subordinate group consenting to the work view of the ruling group. Additionally, Luke’s (1974) dimensional approach to power suggests hegemony is an exercise that secures the compliance of the subordinate group to the dominant group’s thoughts and desires, i.e. not simply active consent but changes in fundamental belief systems. More recently, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) sought to redefine hegemony as a discursive strategy. Research (Willmott 2005) has suggested that Laclau’s (1993) theory of discourse acts to change social relations. As Contu (2002) reflects, ‘Laclau and Mouffe offer a political answer to the crises of dominant rationalist narrative of the social, and try to propose a fresh view of political and social change’ (pp.160-161).

The adoption of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony within organizational research has provided a valuable resource for ethnographic exploration. A key theme from this literature is that ‘hegemonic domination is never completely fixed or permanent but, rather, always subject to renegotiation; a constant work in progress’ (Rhodes & Brown

³ See Jubas (2010) for a detailed overview of how Gramsci’s work has been utilized by scholars from many disciplines.

2005, p.175) (see also Brown & Humphreys 2006; Humphreys & Brown 2002a). Some researchers (e.g. Boje *et al.* 1999) have argued that storytelling in organizations itself is hegemonic at both macro and micro levels and that the subtlest story scribes a meaning that can be imprisoning. A number of ethnographic explorations of hegemonic domination between organizational groups have been conducted from discursive and storytelling perspectives. Brown and Coupland (2005), for instance, explored how trainees in a private-sector graduate scheme were silenced by the successful imposition of hegemonic forces of senior managers. As with Witten's (1993) vignette of the dismissed consultant and that of the IBM security guard (Mumby 1987), Brown and Coupland's (2005) study articulates how power is deployed through narrative as a hegemonic strategy within organizations (Clegg 1989; Fairclough 1989, 1995). Humphreys and Brown's (2002a) ethnographic account of a UK higher education college in a period of change also demonstrates how aspects of hegemonic domination and resistance are promulgated through identity-relevant narratives. I explore this literature further in 2.4.3.

2.3 Organizational identity

This section discusses the literature on organizational identity. Brown (2001) argues that identity is a key idea in the study of human relations and organization, suggesting that 'it is only with the comparatively recent diagnosis of modern society as one in which commodification and technological change has led to an increasingly fragmented, discontinuous and crises-ridden world that identity has been placed centre stage' (p.113) (see also Alvesson 1990; Giddens 1991). This section has six parts, discussing definitions and key themes that have emerged in the field of organizational identity.

2.3.1 Organizational identity: definitions and approaches

The study of individual identity is a search to answer the question ‘Who am I?’ (Kreiner *et al.* 2006). It is an interdisciplinary endeavour, woven within the study of philosophy (for overviews see Baumeister 1986; Gioia 1998), sociology (e.g. Cooley 1902; Goffman 1959a; James 1890; Mead 1934) and psychology (e.g. Erikson 1964, 1968, 1970; Marcia 1966; Stryker 1968). My concern is how the concept of identity has been applied to the study of organizations. While the transition from individual to organizational identity is not a great one, more a ‘leap upward in level of analysis’ (Gioia 1998, p.20), the application of the concept in organizations has raised considerable debate among scholars (see Academy of Management Review 2000a). In this section, I discuss definitions of the notion of organizational identity and outline approaches adopted by theorists who study it.

Definitions and conceptions of organizational identity

Scholars (e.g. Brown 2001, 2006; Dutton & Dukerich 1991; Hatch & Schultz 2004; Scott & Lane 2000a) studying identity in organizations tend to agree that Albert and Whetten’s (1985) research provides the first contemporary definition of organizational identity. For these academics the concept’s value lies in its ability to enable social scientists to characterize key aspects of their organization. They have argued that a statement of an organization’s identity would encapsulate: (i) the central characteristics of the organization, (ii) the features that distinguish it from others, and (iii) the characteristics that might suggest an organization’s sameness or continuity over time, namely its features of temporal continuity. Albert and Whetten (1985) suggested that these three characteristics of centrality, distinctiveness and temporal continuity were each required to define an organization’s identity. While this description has been a

matter of considerable debate (Academy of Management Review 2000a; Gioia 1998), it has served as a springboard for a wealth of theorizing and empirical study over the last three decades.

Scholars interested in the field concur that identity is a complex concept when applied to and in organizations (Albert *et al.* 2000; Gioia 1998). Some researchers, for example, conceive of organizational identity as an internalized cognitive structure. This suggests organizational identity is constructed by organizational members to determine what the organization is and what it desires to become. Whetten and Mackey (2002), for instance, describe organizational identity as the ‘institutionalized claims available to members’ (p.395). Similarly, Fiol and Huff (1992) view organizational identity as a construct embedded in hidden assumptions and argue that it ‘defines who we are in relation to the larger social system to which we belong’ (Fiol *et al.* 1998, p.56). Organizational identity understood in these terms, as a homogeneous construct, has been adopted by functionalist studies (e.g. Ravasi & Phillips 2011).

Other scholars, in contrast, place greater emphasis on understanding organizational identity in terms of how members of a collective understand their identity: ‘identity-as-shared perceptions among members’ (Whetten & Mackey 2002, p.395). As Stimpert *et al.* (1998) argue, organizational identity can be understood as ‘the theory that members of an organization have about who they are’ (p.87). Similarly, Brown (1998b) posits that ‘an organization’s identity may be thought of as those cognitive traits and behavioural characteristics that participants attribute to their organizations’ (p.91).

Some scholars emphasize the link between identity and culture. Diamond (1993), for instance, argues that identity is a product of culture (as well as history and member psychology), and Dutton and Dukerich (1991) suggest that an organization's identity is closely linked to its culture, to the extent that they might be considered similar constructs. Others, in contrast, (Albert & Whetten 1985) have been keen to distinguish between the terms, demonstrating how they are empirically and theoretically different. Hatch and Schultz (2002) share similar views, and argue that identity is not the same as culture, but rather a product of the dynamic relationship between culture and the images that influential stakeholders hold about the organization. Fiol *et al.* (1998) suggest that the difference between the two concepts is not a matter of level of analysis but of perspective. Identity, for them (Fiol *et al.* 1998), is defined by its relationship with the culture or social meaning systems around it, whereas culture is the system of meaning itself. Such differences in definitions of organizational identity indicate the diversity and heterogeneous direction that research has taken. While some regard this inconsistency as problematic (Van Riel 1995) in their quest for a coherent literature, others see plurality in the literature as progressive and healthy (Brown 2007; Corley *et al.* 2006; Glynn *et al.* 2000).

Approaches to studying organizational identity

Organizational identity has been explored from different approaches by scholars and practitioners. Gioia (1998), for instance, suggests three lenses through which identity has been researched: functionalist, interpretive and postmodern. Brown (2007) adds a fourth – psychodynamic approaches – but argues the arbitrary nature of labels as taxonomy and suggests rarely do examples in the literature take a single perspective.

Arguably dominating the field are studies which take a *functionalist approach*, many of which consider the identity of an organization (or corporation) as constituted by tangible features, such as corporate logos, brand management programmes and company reports (Balmer 2001; Soren & Moingeon 2002). This literature is drawn, in particular, from the marketing and brand management fields of inquiry (Olins 1989; Zachary *et al.* 2011) and focuses on the utilitarian nature of identity in organizations (e.g. Moingeon & Ramanantsoa 1995). Brun's (2002) research at France Telecom is typical; in this study, identity change was putatively achieved by the introduction of corporate logos, for example. While the literature on corporate identity is popular with some academics and practitioners, others (e.g. Brown 2006; Porter 2001) question its ability to investigate the emotional and cognitive dimensions of organizational identity.

Interpretive approaches understand organizational identity as socially constructed from participants' articulation of their collective selves. Identities from this perspective reside in what organizational participants believe is enduring, central and distinctive about their organization (Albert & Whetten 1985). As Brown (2007) suggests, 'such identities tend to be characterized as flexible, emergent, group-level constructs that reflect and incorporate individually internalized beliefs, assumptions and perceptions' (p.179). Pratt (2003) offers two theories: a 'gestalt' view that suggests collective identities exist in the relational ties that bind people together and an 'aggregate' perspective, where collective identities are the sum of individual members' views.

Psychodynamic approaches to studies on identity draw on the work of Freud and others (e.g. Bion 1968; Freud 1914; Jaques 1955; Menzies 1970; Miller & Gwynne 1972; Schwartz 1987) on psychoanalysis, the ego, its defence and narcissism as

sources. Schwartz's (1987) case studies, in particular, have been influential in suggesting that organizations have collective self-perceptions. Diamond (1993) emphasizes how organizational members seek to defend their sense of organizational identity against external and internal threats and threats to their individual self-esteem. Identity is used to defend against feelings of anxiety encountered by organizational members.

For Porter (2001), the value of such approaches is the insight into the unconscious life of organizations. Carr and Gabriel (2001) echo this, arguing that organizational research from a psychodynamic perspective acquires deep meaning when 'enriched with psychological insights' (p.417). Brown's (1997) adoption of Freud's (1914) theory of narcissism showed how ego-defences, such as denial and rationalization, might be employed by organizational members to ameliorate their feelings of anxiety. This work was also explored by Brown and Starkey (2000) who investigated the deployment of ego-defensive behaviour in organizations and its link to learning and change.

Work on organizational identity from a *postmodern* perspective could be described as drawing on a disparate group of loosely related approaches that explore issues of identity as discursive and linguistic constructions. Theorizing by some scholars (e.g. Brown & Humphreys 2006; Chreim 2005; Coupland & Brown 2004) emphasizes how the process of identity construction is achieved discursively and suggests that identities can be considered unstable and contested. For others (e.g. Rosenau 1992) organizational identity is an illusion invented by senior managers to exercise power and relieve anxiety from the modern age for their members (Baudrillard 1988; Gioia *et*

al. 2000). A few scholars have sought to progress a narrative approach to investigating organizational identities (Brown 2006; Brown & Humphreys 2006; Chreim 2005; Czarniawska-Joerges 1994; Humphreys & Brown 2002a). Building on Fisher's (1988) narrative metaparadigm, scholars seeking to develop this path conceive of organizational identity as a linguistic construct that resides in the collective identity stories that people tell to one another (Brown 2006). I discuss this literature in more depth in the final section of this chapter.

2.3.2 Identity and identification

Organizational scholars interested in identity have also explored the idea of identification, i.e. the extent to which individuals or groups identify themselves with the organization to which they belong. This work is rooted in social identity and self-categorization theory (Tajfel 1981; Tajfel & Turner 1986) and organizational commitment (e.g. Adler & Adler 1988; Harrison 2000; Salancik 1977). Research on organizational commitment explores the extent to which individuals identify with a particular organization through investigating loyalty (Kanter 1972; O'Reilly & Caldwell 1981) and having a sense of pride in belonging to an organization (Keleman 1958).

Pratt (1998) suggests that organizations with attractive images and minimal intra-organizational competition tend to have higher and more salient levels of participant identification; this is a view consonant with Dutton *et al.*'s (1994) model. For Pratt (1998) 'organizational identification occurs when an individual's beliefs about his or her organization become self-referential or self-defining' (p.172) (cf. Albert *et al.* 1998, p.209; Dutton *et al.* 1994) and follows Aronson's (1992) argument that

individual identification is a response to social influences. Scott and Lane (2000a), in particular, note how identification is a process achieved specifically in the collective minds and social interaction between organizational members and their stakeholders.

Elsbach (1999) outlines four categories of how individuals develop relationships with others and the organization; these are identification, dis-identification, schizo-identification and neutral identification. Identification suggests an active connection between the self and their organization. Dis-identification describes an actual negative connection between the self and the organization. Schizo-identification is a state in which individuals both identify and dis-identify with certain aspects of an organization at the same time. Finally, neutral identification describes an individual's self-perception of impartiality with respect to the identity of the organization and where they actively sense no identification or dis-identification.

2.3.3 The multiplicity of organizational identities

Many theorists suggest organizations have multiple identities (Brown 2006; Elsbach 1999; Gioia & Thomas 1996; Humphreys & Brown 2002a; Pratt & Foreman 2000). These contrast with earlier conceptions (e.g. Albert & Whetten 1985) that argued organizations could be characterized by one or possibly two identities. For Pratt and Foreman (2000), multiple identities are evident in organizations when 'different conceptualizations exist regarding what is central, distinctive, and enduring about the organization' (p.20). Others, such as Hatch and Schultz (2004) suggest that organizational identity 'unfolds through the manifestations of multiple layers or dimensions in the definition members of the same organization give when they define who they are' (p.265). This was observed by Glynn (2000) in her study of identity in

an orchestra, in which she noted that musicians and administrators had a different sense of the organization's identity (Gieryn 2000; Harrison 2000; cf. Empson 2004).

Two further empirical studies shed light on multiple organizational identities. Pratt and Rafaeli's (1997) study of a medical rehabilitation unit demonstrated how organizational members dressed to reflect 'multiple perspectives on multiple issues' (p.300). They argued that symbols, such as a dress, can suggest a plural view of organizational identity and that in the same organization different identities exist side by side. Pratt and Rafaeli's (1997) conclusion challenges the assumption of an integrative or a 'monolithic identity' in organizations (p.300). Symbols of dress and conflict in understandings of an organization's identity were also investigated by Humphreys and Brown (2002b) who focused on the wearing of the Islamic headscarf within a Turkish university. The notion of conflicting identities was also explored by Golden-Biddle and Rao (1997) who identified multiple identities within organizations in their study of boardroom governance. Here a concept of 'conflicts of commitment' is described and defined as behaviour 'based on the members' own strain in adhering to conflicting aspects of the organization's identity' (Golden-Biddle & Rao 1997, p.340), i.e. where conflicts exist as members uphold one identity while undermining another. Pratt and Foreman (2000) also develop the notion of multiple and conflicting identities in organizations and suggest that 'multiple and potentially competing identities (or "mental modes") are a reality of organizational life' (p.141).

Similarly, theorists suggest that multiple identities need to be managed by organizations in the modern environment (Barker 1998; Cheney 1991; Golden-Biddle & Rao 1997; Marziliano 1998; Pratt 1998; Sillince & Jarzabkowski 2004). Pratt and

Foreman (2000) propose a model of classification that highlights possible management responses for organizations with high to low identity plurality and identity synergy. Their work suggests that the benefits of multiple identities are that organizations are better able to meet the expectations of various stakeholders. Sillince and Jarzabkowski (2004) also developed ideas about the successful co-ordination of multiple identities to attain strategic outcomes, advocating that senior management teams should couple organizational participants to particular identities to optimize action.

2.3.4 The stability of organizational identity

Although Albert and Whetten (1985) and others (e.g. Anteby & Molnár 2012) claim an organization's identity is enduring, an important strand of research suggests identity is unstable and mutable (Chreim 2005; Gioia & Thomas 1996). Gioia *et al.* (2000) suggest that 'it is useful to differentiate between an enduring identity and an identity having continuity' (p.65). Their argument views identity at the organizational level as fluid and progressive. Gioia *et al.* (2000) suggest that an organization's identity is unstable and adaptive and that organizational identity is 'better viewed as a relatively fluid and unstable concept' (p.63). Indeed, they maintain that endurance is essentially illusory and find the durability of identity in the labels used by members of the organization. They contend that the meaning of such labels changes over time and, as a consequence, so too does the organization's identity. As Gioia *et al.* (2000) note, 'perhaps most important ... the instability of identity is actually adaptive in formulating organizational change in response to environmental demands' (p. 64).

In further work on adaptive instability, Corley and Gioia (2004) suggest that identity change can result in a state of ambiguity within the organization and argue that this can

be destabilizing. Scott and Lane (2000a) perceive identity as emergent but inherently sticky. While they agree that organizational identity is unstable, they believe that it does not change easily and cite power dynamics as a potential cause of this 'stickiness' (Scott & Lane 2000a, p.143). Their central idea is that 'both identity change and identity endurance are adaptive responses to the needs and demands of an organization's salient audience – its stakeholders – during its lifespan' (p.143).

Empson (2004) offers empirical evidence of organizational identity change within a professional organization (cf. Glynn 2000). She argues that 'professional and organizational identity coexists in a complex relationship' and that both these identities are dynamic - as the environment changes, so too do participants' interpretations of their professional identities (p.6). Other theorists (e.g. Elstak & Van Riel 2005) suggest that where members strongly identify with the organization, they are only likely to engage in collective change to the extent that this does not threaten their self-continuity within the organization. Indeed, Reger *et al.* (1994) argue 'the restraining effect of organizational identity beliefs is expected to be stronger when these beliefs are positively valued, but negative beliefs are also likely to constrain interpretation and action' (p.568). Negative identity beliefs may indicate to members that the organization cannot change (Reger *et al.* 1994).

2.3.5 Organizational identity, image and reputation

The relationship between an organization's identity and image is another important theme. Within the literature there are at least three ways in which organizational image is understood: (i) what members think about their organization, (ii) what outsiders think of the organization, and (iii) what members project about their organization to

influence an outsider's view (Whetten & Mackey 2002). Some scholars (e.g. Marziliano 1998) argue that the study of organizational image is about answering the question 'What do others think we are?' As Alvesson (1990) describes it, image is a 'holistic and vivid impression held by a particular group towards a corporation' (p.164). Dutton and Dukerich (1991) suggest that image refers to how members of an organization perceive what others see as their organization's attributes. Gioia *et al.* (2000) assert that managers are concerned with projecting images of the organization that align with their perceptions of the organization's identity, described by Bouchikhi *et al.* (1998) as the projected organizational image.

A number of empirical studies have explored the interplay between identity and image. Dutton and Dukerich's (1991) case study of the New York and Jersey Port Authority demonstrated how attacks by the media tarnished the organization's image, which in turn affected adversely members' understanding of their collective identity. The metaphor developed to describe this process was that of a mirror image; the negative external media reports were mirrored by the growing negative image that members had of the organization. Dutton and Dukerich's (1991) core argument is that individuals in organizations act, and make sense of and commit to organizational actions with the mirror image in mind, and that this affects their sense of organizational identity. Consistent with this view, Alvesson (1991) found that members of an organization monitor and evaluate their actions, leading to judgments about identity. Both Dutton and Dukerich's (1991) and Alvesson's (1991) conclusions have important implications for how individuals in organizations behave, diagnose, identify and respond to problems and their work environment (Cheney & Christensen 2001; Hatch & Schultz 2002). For example, Dukerich *et al.* (1994) explain how images of an individual's

workplace determine the strength of their identification with the organization: ‘images of organizations shape how members define themselves ... [and as] members define themselves with attributes that overlap with the attributes they use to define the organization, they are strongly identified with the organization’ (p.256).

The study of reputation has its roots in impression management theory (Dukerich & Carter 1998; Fombrun & Shanley 1990). Scott and Lane (2000a) describe reputation in terms of where beliefs about an organization’s attributes become widely accepted. For Rindova and Fombrun (1998) reputation is the evaluation and interpretation of an organization’s identity. The interplay between image, identity and reputation is referred to by Whetten and Mackey (2002) as the ‘self-management project’ and is core, they argue, to the success of organizations as ‘social actors’ (p.400). Indeed, they argue that identity provides a point of reference for the study of image and reputation as it is a source that provides answers to such questions as: What should our image be? What feedback from our constituents is of most value to us? (Whetten & Mackey 2002)

2.3.6 Organizational identity and metaphor

Some theorists (Lakoff & Johnson 2003) view metaphor as central to human understanding. Organizational scientists have highlighted the heuristic value of metaphor in yielding deeper insights into organizations and behaviours (Gabriel 1999a; Hatch & Yanow 2008; Morgan 1986; Tsoukas 1991). Indeed, Burrell and Morgan (1979) argue that metaphors can be productive both in theory formulation and empirical observations in organizations.

While few theorists have sought to analyse identity as a metaphor, Cornelissen (2002a, 2002b) specifically called into question the use of metaphor in organization studies and, in particular, in understanding organizational identity. While Cornelissen (2002a) states that theory developed on organizational identity cannot be avoided altogether, he argues that metaphors unhelpfully have the potential to ‘carry hidden cargo of dubious implications’ (p.267) into organizational theory. His argument suggests that it is logically incorrect to equate an individual-level concept with that of a collective concept as to do so would reify organizations and disregard issues of individual agency. In response to Cornelissen (2002a), Gioia *et al.* (2002a, 2002b) assert that organizational identity, understood as a metaphor, has a generative strength that resonates as a first order concept with organizational members and for researchers as a second order concept to explain this experience. From a social psychological perspective, Haslam *et al.* (2003) argue that both Cornelissen’s and Gioia *et al.*’s arguments are too narrow as organizational identity is far more than merely a metaphor. For them, there is greater value in using the phrase ‘organizational identity’ in a non-metaphorical way to refer to ‘psychological and social realities’, i.e. what takes place within the minds of individuals and the impacts that subsequent actions of individuals have on the collective (p. 365). Within this thesis, the use of metaphor is important as an alternative way of describing organizational identity, particularly throughout chapter 8.

2.4 Narrative Identities

‘We are all storytellers, and we are the stories we tell’ (McAdams *et al.* 2006, p.3) and ‘[w]e equate life to the story or stories we tell about it’ (Ricoeur 1991, p.3). In this section, I explore the literature on notions of narrated identities, namely the idea that

‘people arrive at an understanding of themselves and the world through narratives’ (Gates 1995, p.57). First, I highlight how scholars of philosophy and psychology conceive of narrative identity. Secondly, I explore how the idea has been examined at the organizational level and used to investigate issues of inter-group power and hegemony.

2.4.1 Narrative identity: conceptions and themes

In this section, I discuss how philosophers (e.g. Ricoeur 1988, 1991, 1992) and scholars of psychology (e.g. Bruner 1990; McAdams 1985, 1997; Polkinghorne 1988; Sarbin 1986) have conceptualized narrated identity before exploring some key themes from these conceptions.

Ricoeur’s conception of a narrative identity

I discuss first Ricoeur’s conception of narrative identity: ‘that is, the sort of identity to which a human being has access thanks to the mediation of the narrative function’ (1991, p.73). For Ricoeur (1988), the notion of a narrative identity was a ‘fragile offshoot’ (p.246) of the *Time and Narrative* trilogy (1983, 1985, 1988) that examined the relationship between narrative and time in historical and fictive writing and the configuration of experience through narrative. The notion was more fully developed in *Oneself as Another* (Ricoeur 1992).

Ricoeur’s conception of a narrative identity focuses on the individual as the unit of analysis although he makes it clear the notion can also be valuable when applied to a community (1988, p.247). As he remarks, ‘we can speak of the self-constancy of a community, just as we spoke of it as applied to an individual subject. Individual and

community are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that become for them their actual history' (Ricoeur 1988, p.247).

In *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur's (1983, 1985, 1988) theory of hermeneutics values lived experience as key to interpreting behaviour. As Ezzy (2005) asserts, 'Ricoeur's hermeneutics emphasizes the reality of lived experience, of acting in the world, as foundational to any attempt to understand the interpretive process' (p.49). Ricoeur outlines a three-fold hermeneutic cycle consisting of (i) a prefiguration stage in which an individual's narrative imagination prefigures lived experience, (ii) a configuration stage in which events are configured into a story with a central plot, and (iii) reconfiguration in which the narrative evolves and changes in the mind of the listener. Intrinsic within this cycle is how the past and the future figure in the present through narrative. As Rasmussen (1995) explains 'a narrative can link the past with the future by giving a sense of continuity to an ever changing story of the self' (p.164).

Ricoeur uses his theory of hermeneutics and analysis of narrative to develop the notion of a narrative identity. 'The self, [Ricoeur] argues, is discovered in its own narrational acts' (Ezzy 2005, p.50). Such a conception suggests that an individual's identity is an outcome of narration (Ricoeur 1991, 1992), achieved through a narrative mediation of self-knowledge. Narrative interprets the self and, in so doing, provides a figured self. As Ricoeur (1991) suggests '[w]hat the narrative interpretation properly provides is precisely 'the figure-able' character of the individual which has for its result, that the self, narratively interpreted, is itself a figured self - a self which figures itself as this or that' (p.80).

Central to Ricoeur's conception of the construction of a narrative identity is the difference between two concepts of identity: selfhood and sameness. For Ricoeur, the ability to reflect upon oneself is a characterization of selfhood; identity as sameness, in contrast, is a narrative construct achieved by this reflexive process: 'narrative identity constructs a sense of self-sameness, continuity and character in the plot of the story a person tells about himself or herself' (Ezzy 2005, p.50). A narrative identity is a fluid construct built from interweaving an individual's historic events which are fictively interpreted. Indeed, fundamental to Ricoeur's conception is a narrative identity which is neither a coherent series of events nor a monolithic construct but a continually evolving and changing construct (Giddens 1981).

I understand Ricoeur's conception of a narrative identity to refer to how individuals weave events from their history, intrinsically with the aid of their fictive resources, to develop plots within which sense-making and actions in the present are made and their identity is established. A sense of identity, or 'self-sameness' (Ezzy 2005, p.56), is constructed through the process of emplotment, which I discuss further below.

Social psychological conceptions of narrative identity

As a sub-field of psychology, narrative psychology is concerned with how humans deal with experience by constructing and listening to the narratives of others. Many scholars researching this field suggest human actions and experiences are filled with meaning and that narrative, rather than logic, is the primary way in which meaning is communicated (e.g. Bruner 1991; Polkinghorne 1988). As I mentioned above, fundamental to this field is the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) on the social construction of reality. This was instrumental in providing psychologists (e.g. Bruner

1990, 1991; Josselson 1995; Murray 1995; Polkinghorne 1988; Rosenwald & Ochberg 1992; Sarbin 1986) with a foundation for thinking differently about the objective and subjective nature of the social world. More recently, McAdams *et al.* (2006) have referred to narrative identity as ‘the stories people construct and tell about themselves to define who they are for themselves and for others ... [O]ur narrative identities are the stories we live by’ (p.4). Within the field of narrative psychology there are a number of key themes that are also implicit in Ricoeur’s conception of a narrative identity, such as emplotment, issues of unity and multiplicity, and the role that the ‘other’ plays in the construction of a narrative identity.

Emplotment and issues of unity and multiplicity

Emplotment is a process humans use to arrange events and actions in order to give cohesion to a narrative. For Ricoeur (1983) emplotment is a capability (evident in a narrative identity) that takes discordant and heterogeneous events of human experience and orders them into a coherent story (Baumeister & Wilson 1996). Given that this requires individuals to weave and craft events, characters and actions together, there is debate among scholars about whether narrative identities demonstrate unity or not. Some theorists (e.g. McAdams 1985, 1997) argue that narrative identities organize an individual’s life by making coherent the diffused and fragmented episodes of that life. Indeed, as McAdams (1985) remarks, individuals formulate their narrative identity to ‘reduce the multitude of motley information about the self to manageable personified categories’ (p.127) in order that their lives have a sense of inner sameness and continuity. In contrast, others (e.g. Gergen 1991; Hermans 1996; Krieger 1983; Raggatt 2006) suggest that narrative identities express multiple or conflicting aspects of the self and as such are polyphonic expressions (Hermans 1996). As Raggatt (2006)

puts it, 'narrative identity is more like cacophony of competing interests or warring historians than it is like a nucleus with a single voice' (p.32). For these scholars an individual's narrative identity is less integrated and unified than for McAdams, although, as McAdams and Logan (2006) argue in their study of the lives of academics, an individual can construct multiple identities that are unified by common themes over their lifetime.

Others in the construction of a narrative identity

A number of scholars have emphasized the role played by the 'other' in the construction of a narrative identity (Athens 1994; Bruner 1991; Ezzy 2005). Athens (1994), for example, discusses the role of self-dialogues through narrative with phantom others, who by inhabiting our thoughts are used to reflect on our past, present and anticipated future experience. Athens (1994) describes this process as an internalized or imagined soliloquy, which Ezzy (2005) characterizes as 'internalized or imagined intersubjective encounters' (p.52). There is a link, Athens (1994) argues, between the stability of the phantom others and stability of the self; where the phantom others remain stable so too does the externalized identity. This emphasizes the importance of the 'other' in the construction of the self. While Athens' (1994) phantom internal 'other' is arguably key to the development of a narrative identity, so too is the external 'other'.

McAdams *et al.* (2006) contend that '[s]tories are performed in the presence of certain audiences' (p.6). This illustrates how different identity narratives may be recounted by an individual depending on the audience. Clearly, those theorists who stress the role of the audience and the social context in the construction of narrative predicate their view

on Berger and Luckmann's (1966) work. Key to this is how identity narratives emerge through on-going conversations, through social relationships directed by the cultural context. As Holstein and Gubrium (2000) argue, narrators craft and 'inventively construct their narratives, they also draw from what is culturally available, storying their lives in recognizable ways' (p.103).

Temporality of narrative identities

Important to understanding narrative identity is the issue of temporality: as Somers (1994) remarks, narrative identities are 'constituted and reconstituted *in time and over time*' (p.621). Through the process of emplotment, many scholars maintain that a narrative identity remains fluid as identity is embedded in plots that change over time (Somers 1994). As McAdams *et al.* (2006) argue, '[i]dentities are not fixed and frozen' (p.7).

Some researchers have noted a narrative conception actually incorporates temporality (e.g. Ezzy 2005). This point had been explored earlier by Mead (1959) who argued the significance of temporality for the self-concept. Mead (see Ezzy 2005) uses Einstein's theory of relativity to describe how an individual on a train passing another can hold both the concept of being still while moving at the same time. The point Mead (1959) makes is that this concept is similar to how understandings of the past and future are reinterpreted in the emergent present. This view also emphasizes the temporal nature of identity narratives as they configure events of the past to suit the needs of the present.

In the field of psychology scholars suggest that while an individual's temperament and characteristics may retain a degree of constancy and stability from one day to the next, identity will inevitably change over time with circumstances and age. As Tuval-Mashiach (2006) suggests, some identity narratives will show change and development while others show stability and decline.

2.4.2 Exploring organizational identities through narrative

In this section I discuss how scholars studying organizations, particularly from a postmodern perspective, have analysed narratives to inquire into the nature of group and collective identities (Brown 2006; Brown & Humphreys 2006; Chreim 2005; Czarniawska-Joerges 1994; Humphreys & Brown 2002a). As Rhodes and Brown (2005) argue, the appropriation of a narrative methodology can assist scholars in the development of insightful theory into organizations by opening new paths for exploration (Pentland 1999). I discuss a theoretical basis for understanding collective identities through narrative, including a framework for analysing such identities. I also outline how a narrative approach to exploring identity can be useful in investigating issues of power and hegemony in organizational life.

Organizations can be viewed as storytelling environments (Boje 1991a, 1995; Gabriel 2000) which are constructed discursively through acts of languaging (Iedema & Wodak 1999; Mumby & Clair 1997). Indeed, many scholars have argued that organizations are built socially from conversations (Ford 1999) or through dialogues (Hazen 1993) that, over time, serve to objectify reality for their participants (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Humphreys & Brown 2002a). Empirical studies have suggested that narratives authored by organizational members are used to make sense of events

(Brown 2000; Gephart 1991) and are sources of knowledge in the practice of organizing (Czarniawska 1997).

Brown (2006) argues that a narrative approach to organizational research is important in accessing organizations in general and exploring identity. For Brown (2006), the identities of organizations are constructed by all the identity relevant narratives that organizational members author about 'who they are' (Kreiner *et al.* 2006), or about what they believe is central, distinctive and enduring about their organization (Albert & Whetten 1985). Through this lens, identities of organizations are embedded in the stories that people tell to one another and are authored to support members' sense-making of the organization (Weick 1995). Before I explore the nature of organizational identity narratives, it is important to note that organizational narratives have different authorial elements than individual identity narratives (Czarniawska-Joerges 1994). This is because narratives in organizations have multiple authors and stakeholders, some of whom may tell different versions of their narrative identities at any point in time (Chreim 2005).

Some scholarship has criticized research that emphasizes the homogeneous nature of organizational culture and an organization's identity, i.e. a conception of identity that members would all agree on (Brown 2006; Glynn *et al.* 2000). Identity homogeneity, adopted by many researchers working from functionalist perspectives, may offer more putatively coherent conclusions to the question 'Who are we?' However, criticism of such approaches suggests an oversimplification of issues of identity in organizations (e.g. Chreim 2005). Additionally, for some researchers (e.g. Brown 2006; Humphreys & Brown 2002a) functionalist approaches deny a conception of organizations as power

effects (Foucault 1977) and organizational identity as a contested linguistic construct among members of the organization. However, some theorists (e.g. Brown 2006; Brown & Humphreys 2006) have sought to explore theoretically and empirically organizational identities as heterogeneous constructs, constituted by the totality of all the individual identity-relevant stories that members narrate. Such an understanding suggests that organizational narratives are continually made and remade. As Brown (2006) asserts, ‘the very fabric of organization is continuously being created and recreated through the elaboration, contestation and exchange of narratives’ (p.735). From this perspective, an organization’s identities are far from monolithic, simple and homogeneous constructs, but can be multi-faceted, complex, changing and often conflicting (Chreim 2005; Tsoukas & Chia 2002).

A framework for analysing collective identities

Brown (2006) outlines a framework of elements – reflexivity, voice, plurivocity, temporality and fictionality – which he argues, when taken together, offer a way of analysing collective identities through a narratological lens. I use this framework to organize my data in Chapter 5 and here discuss each element in turn.

Holland (1999) suggests that *reflexivity* can be defined as ‘that which turns back upon, or takes account of the self’ (p.464). Many scholars have argued that organizational identity is a ‘reflexive concept’ (Gioia *et al.* 2000, p.76; Brown 2006; Chreim 2005) as it is through the process of reflexivity that organizational participants understand, explain, define and create meaning for themselves as an organization. Indeed, as Chreim (2005) puts it, ‘identity is a reflexive project that consists of sustaining continuously revised biographical narratives that must integrate events occurring in the

external world into the ongoing story' (p.570) (see also Giddens 1981). Key is that organizational members turn back upon their self to author narratives of their individual and collective identities. Consequently, such reflective narratization of identity can privilege the agent and as such can be considered an act of power, albeit that any narratization will be linguistically constrained (Brown 2006).

The second of Brown's (2006) elements is *voice*. In the same way that Barthes (1977) suggests the narratives of the world are numberless, so too, it has been argued, are the collective identity narratives that organizational participants author (Brown 2006). The issue here is that narratives are told by organizational members from a particular viewpoint and are distinctive, unique and highly specific to the individual authoring the narrative. Consequently, some voices achieve a privileged status over others (Cobb 1993; Cobb & Rifkin 1991; Westwood & Linstead 2001) and in doing so are in a position to promulgate certain narratives at the expense of silencing others (Academy of Management Review 2000b; Brown & Coupland 2005). In this sense narratives serve political ends. Indeed, as Chreim (2005) puts it, 'an organizational identity narrative reflects power positions and authorial preferences' (p.570).

Plurivocity refers to the multiple understandings and interpretations of narratives, including identity-relevant narratives. Some scholars have argued that plurivocity is a necessary condition allowing the self to be presented flexibly. For example, it may enable individuals to deal with different stakeholders who demand different identity characteristics (Nkomo & Cox 1996). However, there is an issue of credibility concerning the stories that individuals can narrate about their identity. While identity

narratives are rarely monolithic, they often have common themes and key personalities, i.e. narratives which dominate and serve to maintain and promulgate the hegemony of elites.

The concept of *temporality* is integral to narrative. Bruner asserts (1991) narratives are ‘accounts of events occurring over time’ (p.6). Somers (1994) argues that narrative identities are ‘constituted and reconstituted *in time* and *over time*’ (p.621). The issue here is how time, as a flexible narrative resource, can be incorporated into identity narratives in order that the dominant interests of individuals and groups may prevail. Over time, identity-relevant narratives are subject to changes by such groups; given that narratives may be revised, reformulated (or re-spun), they can be perceived as continual ‘works-in-progress’ (Brown 2006, p.741).

The fifth and final element is *fictionality* (Brown 2006). In 2.2.2 I noted that Gabriel (2004) uses the phrase ‘seminal ambiguity’ to describe organizational story plots which have elements of fiction embedded within them. This idea is important to understanding this element of the framework. For Brown (2006), collective identity narratives tend not to be ‘comprehensive, consistent, or precise’, albeit that they are constructed from historical data (p.741). The conception of collective narrative and identities as fictive constructs follows Ricoeur’s (1988, 1991, 1992) notion of identity narratives where historically factual events are interwoven with a predicted future. Depending on the effectiveness of the hegemonic powers of those narrating, the scope for fictionality and ‘editing’ (Dunne 1995, p.153) of identity-relevant narratives may be constrained.

Collective narrative identities and the dynamics of power and hegemony

As Brown (2006) suggests, when taken together, the elements of this framework are ‘pivotal to an appreciation of narrative identities as complexes of in-progress stories and story fragments, which are in a perpetual state of *becoming* and suffused with power’ (p.732, emphasis in the original). Inherent in such an approach – and within each of the elements of the framework (Brown 2006) – is the potential for understanding what organizational members consider central, distinctive and enduring about their organization as a result of hegemonic struggles between members. As Brown (2006) remarks, ‘it is by focusing attention on identity narratives ... that organizations can most easily be analysed as power effects’ (732) and as locales of power (Brown & Lewis 2011; Pfeffer 1977, 1981), resistance (Brown & Coupland 2005; Brown & Humphreys 2006; De Cock 1998), hegemony (Brown & Humphreys 2002), control (Witten 1993), and struggle (Fleming & Spicer 2007). Key to understanding organizations and organizational identities as power effects is how these result from a ‘complex interplay of politically motivated individuals and groups’ pursuing self-development and esteem (Humphreys & Brown 2002a, p.425).

As noted above, many scholars have conceived of collective organizational identities as homogeneous constructs. Some argue this observation is illusory and is merely an examination of dominant individuals and groups who have successfully mobilized and imposed their unitary and monological understanding of the truth on others (Rhodes 2000) or that narratives of resistance have been disregarded in favour of dominant grand narratives (Boje 1995; Lyotard 1984). This was highlighted in an empirical study conducted by Humphreys and Brown (2002a) that explored how a senior

management team in a higher education college sought to impose their own identity narrative of their college on their subordinates and in doing so reduce identity plurality (cf. Glynn *et al.* 2000). As Humphreys and Brown (2002a) describe it, ‘identity ... is a central concern for participants in organizations for whom ... differences between self-authored and elite sponsored identity narratives can engender dislocating polarizing identity dualities which complicate people’s sense [of who they are]’ (p.440). Similarly, other scholars (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991; Hardy *et al.* 2000) have explored how senior managers seek to promote an environment that promulgates those aspects of their organization that they believe are important. Researchers suggest that this is rarely a successful strategy: whilst collective consensus of identity may be possible in the narratives promoted, it is fragile and temporary. The consequence of this lack of consensus is that the hegemony of individuals and groups is always incomplete and unstable.

2.5 Conclusion

My research is an exploration of the narratives that individuals articulate about their organization’s identity. I have drawn upon theory and empirical study from the fields of organizational discourse, narrative, power and identity, as well as exploring how scholars from other disciplines have theorized these issues. I framed the review within the linguistic turn (Rorty 1967) that emphasizes the centrality of language in the construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Searle 1995). I found that within the social sciences the linguistic turn has motivated a wealth of research in studies (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000b; Deetz 2003) on organizational discourse, narrative and storytelling (Boje 1991a; Brown 1998b; Czarniawska 1998; Gabriel 2000; Grant *et al.* 2004).

I reviewed how scholars define organizational identity and noted differences in the way it is conceptualized: defining the phrase remains a matter of scholarly debate. I highlighted research emphasizing that an organization's identities have been considered a singular and unified set of characteristics that would describe what is central, distinctive and enduring about the organization. I reviewed literature (Brown 2006; Humphreys & Brown 2002a) which viewed group and collective identity very differently, emphasizing the polyphonic (Hazen 1993), plural (Glynn *et al.* 2000), multiple (Pratt & Foreman 2000), unstable (Gioia *et al.* 2000), and changing (Gioia & Thomas 1996) characteristics of organizational identity. It is this latter understanding that I adopt in this thesis.

Core to my exploration of organizational identity is the literature on narrative identity. I noted how philosophers (Ricoeur 1992) and psychologists (Bruner 1990; McAdams 1985; Polkinghorne 1988; Sarbin 1986) have conceptualized a narrated identity. Here, the literature emphasized identity accessed by the mediation of narrative and how a narrative identity communicates meaning of lived experience (Ricoeur 1992). I also explored issues such as time, multiplicity, enactment and the influence of the internal and external 'other' in the creation and maintenance of a narrated identity. Following this, I discussed the notion of narrative identity at group and organizational levels, including a framework for analysing collective identity through a narratological lens (Brown 2006). I reviewed literature that considers how identity-relevant narratives in an organization can be viewed as a hegemonic struggle between participants and groups within an organization. Indeed, 'there is no escaping power' Foucault tells us, 'it is always-already present' (1990, p.82).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

... [T]he worlds we study are created through the texts that we write. We do not study lived experience; rather, we examine lived textuality. Lived textuality transforms lived experience – that is, real, live experiences are shaped by prior textual representations and understandings.

(Denzin 1995, p.9)

3.1 Introduction

Denzin (1995) argues that lived textuality is created and captured by the collective voices of the researcher and the ‘other’. As dialogical texts, ‘the voices of the other and the researcher come alive and interact with one another [and are] accomplishments [which] have a prior life in the context where they were produced’ (p.9). This chapter describes the methods I used to capture the voice of the ‘other’ and my own in this research. I do so by exploring key issues that impacted on the heterogeneous and shifting organizational identity-relevant narratives articulated by the participants in my study, such as plurality (Boje 1995; Eisenhardt 2000; Glynn *et al.* 2000; Rhodes 2002); reflexivity (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000; Denzin 2003; Hardy *et al.* 2001; Johnson & Duberley 2003; Weick 1999; Woolgar 1988); voice (Bakhtin 1981; Denzin 1995; Hertz 1997; Moore & Muller 1999); temporality (Boje 2001; Czarniawska 1997; Rhodes & Brown 2005); and veracity (Brown 2006; Gergen & Thatchenkery 1996; Jeffcutt 1994; McKelvey 2002). I also highlight the tension between science and story in the methods of research I adopted (Gergen 2003; Rhodes & Brown 2005; cf. Willmott 1997). The chapter has three main sections. In the first, I explore the paradigm in which my research is framed. The second describes how I developed the research using narrative and ethnographic approaches and the final section highlights how the identity-relevant narratives collected were analysed and represented before I make concluding remarks.

3.2 Interpretive research

Responding to calls for authors to be explicit about the paradigm in which their research is located, this section provides an overview of the interpretive paradigm that frames my study (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Kuhn 1970). I discuss key elements of a paradigm: (i) ontological and epistemological considerations, and (ii) methodology. My purpose is to describe the basic set of assumptions guiding my research which are based on interrelated assumptions regarding ontology, epistemology and human nature (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Guba 1990).

Kuhn (1970) refers to a paradigm, albeit a contested concept, as a set of beliefs, assumptions and techniques that are ‘shared by members of a given community’ (p.175). By providing a regulative framework of metaphysical assumptions, a paradigm represents a disciplinary matrix for a research community. Burrell and Morgan (1979) describe four sociological paradigms, developed by combining the ‘subjective–objective’ dimensions characterizing social science with the sociology of ‘radical change’ and ‘regulation’: the resulting paradigms they propose are entitled, ‘functionalist’, ‘interpretive’, ‘radical humanist’ and ‘radical structuralist’. In the construction of these positions, Burrell and Morgan (1979) argue that there is incommensurability between them, a view shared by some others (e.g. Jackson & Carter 1991). Such a conception advocates research bounded within a single paradigm due to the unique epistemological, ontological and methodological commitments within each. This approach is far from universally accepted; many scholars (e.g. Giddens 1976; Harris 2000; Hassard 1991; Willmott 1993) value integrating and synthesizing work across paradigms through strategies such as metatriangulation (Gioia & Pitre 1990). Others argue for ‘interplay’ between paradigms (e.g. Spender

1998; Martin 1990), given that paradigmatic insights and biases are effectively identified from different viewpoints (Hatch & Schultz 1996). Whilst I appreciate these arguments, my research is set within an interpretive paradigm.

Such an approach assumes relativist ontological and subjective epistemological commitments and takes a perspective in which ‘individual actors negotiate, regulate and live their lives within the context of the *status quo*’ (Burrell & Morgan 1979, p.254). Moreover, research within an interpretive paradigm ‘seeks explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action’ (Burrell & Morgan 1979, p.28). Smircich (1985) notes how interpretive scholars explore ‘webs of meaning, organized in terms of symbols and representations’ (p.63). Others note the paradigm’s emphasis on investigating interrelated processes of interpretation and sensemaking (Hatch & Schultz 1996) and the origins of means by which communities ‘construct and maintain particular views of reality’ (Aram & Salipante 2003, p.193). Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest theorists adopting this approach ‘tend to share a common perspective, in that their primary concern is to understand the subjective experience of individuals’ (p.253) from within the organization; given this, from an interpretive perspective, the social world has a precarious ontological status (Morgan 1980). In the following subsections I describe the paradigmatic frame in which my research is conducted, considering first my ontological and epistemological assumptions, followed by my qualitative research methodology.

3.2.1 Ontological and epistemological commitments

Some scholars (e.g. Jeffcutt 1994; Johnson & Duberley 2003; Morgan & Smircich 1980) have argued that management researchers should give greater commitment to explaining their ontological beliefs. In particular, they suggest researchers make clear whether they regard reality as external to them and ‘out there’ or a construct of subjectivity. Equally the researcher’s epistemological assumptions are significant to how research is framed. Epistemological and ontological considerations form the basis of the researcher’s chosen paradigm and a commonality of perspective binds research communities (Burrell & Morgan 1979). Two dominating paradigms based upon opposing epistemological and ontological positions have competed within the field of social science research (Hughes 1990; Patton 1990): positivist approaches (e.g. Comte 1853; Donaldson 1996) and subjective/phenomenological approaches (e.g. Husserl 1962; Schultz 1967).

My interpretive approach suggests that no researcher ‘can stand outside their own epistemological and ontological commitments’ (Johnson & Duberley 2000, p.177). However, I recognize that there are other ontological and epistemological positions that have been adopted by management researchers (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Hassard 1991; Johnson & Duberley 2003). Research on organizational identity framed by a positivist perspective has led to a conceptualization of organizational identities as distinct constructs with properties independent of the inquirer and the ‘other’ (Whetten & Mackey 2002). To a positivist organizational researcher, with objectivist ontological and epistemological assumptions, language has the capability of mirroring reality: from such a position ‘language [is] an outward expression of an inward mentality’ (Gergen & Thatchenkery 1996, p.361) and is the ‘means of expressing something other

than itself' (Cooper & Burrell 1988, p.94). Positivist research also emphasizes how general theorizing makes predictions about the future, based upon which research reaches scientific 'truth'.

Antithetical to the positivist approach and consonant with my interpretive research paradigm, a phenomenological stance, characterized by subjective ontological and epistemological assumptions, suggests that organizational identities are only rendered meaningful when they are experienced by individuals' consciousness and acts of languaging. Prior to these acts of language, objects are 'simulacra', as Baudrillard argues (1988), simulations that refer to nothing but themselves; 'we may understand them only through analysis of their own self-referential workings' (Cooper & Burrell 1988, p.94). As Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) note, 'from the subjectivist point of view, people create and experience realities in different ways because individuals and groups have their own assumptions, beliefs and perceptions that lead them to do so' (p.12). Viewed from this perspective, identities are socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann 1966) and as such, the distinction between ontology and epistemology is blurred: what constitutes reality is dependent upon what the author's knowledge allows. Phenomenological researchers employ research methods that are designed to access meaning and explore how meaning is made. They seek also to understand how meanings are transformed in the light of the researcher's experiences.

Central to a phenomenological approach, the linguistic turn (Johnson & Duberley 2003) suggests that 'language is never innocent [as] truth, or reality, becomes a socio-linguistic artefact where justification lies in the discursive hegemony culturally-specific to a "form" of life' (pp.1285–1286). My research regards language as a creator

of reality: '[w]ords, in effect, are carriers of "truths" and "knowledge"' (Gergen & Thatchenkery 1996, p.361). Given the above, I consider there is no separation of the subject and object of organizational identities (Chia 1995; Jeffcutt 1994; Kilduff & Mehra 1997). My approach denies that texts are stable or certain and therefore I did not consider that this research could be a quest for a single 'truth' (Knights 1992). As Thomas and Linstead (2002) argue, 'identity is in flux, in a permanent state of becoming as various social and linguistic constructs (or discourses) vie with one another for supremacy' (p.75). Consequently, the meaning of organizational identities can only ever be precarious (Linstead & Grafton-Small 1992), continually negotiated, renegotiated (Johnson & Duberley 2000; Parker 1992) and unstable, given the 'elusive nature of language...and [that] discourses of organizations are no more than changing moves within a game that is never completed' (Hassard 1994, pp.305–318).

3.2.2 Qualitative methodology

Given that interpretive research emphasizes understanding experience and lived textuality, I adopted a qualitative methodology. I did not triangulate the narrative data I collected with quantitative research approaches, although I recognize that it would have been possible to undertake a quantitative content analysis of the narrative data I collected (e.g. Feldman *et al.* 1993; Schulman *et al.* 1989). The principal reason for this was that the nature of the phenomena of my study 'challenges the utility of ... methodological closure' (Morgan & Smircich 1980, p.498) that positivist organizational researchers seek by conducting quantitative research. While scholars exploring organizational identity have done so using different methodological lenses (such as postmodern, functional, interpretive, and psychodynamic; see Brown 2007; Gioia 1998), the vast majority of scholars have employed a qualitative approach. Given

this and the fact that narrative inquiry is only effectively carried out using such methods, I did not believe that quantitative measures would offer valuable insight into my research (Pinnegar & Daynes 2007). Indeed, I took Morgan and Smircich's (1980) advice that researchers need to 'investigate from within the subject of study and employ research techniques appropriate to that task' (p.498). As organizational narrative identities are created and recreated *in vivo*, so my research methodology adopted an approach that could get closest to their 'point of origin' (Van Maanen 1979a, p.540).

In their discussion of qualitative research Denzin and Lincoln (2005a) remark that it is difficult to arrive at any firm definition of the field as 'it is never just one thing' (p.7).

They define qualitative research as:

'...situated activity that locates the observer in the world... [It turns] the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self... [It] involves an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.' (p.3)

There are a number of key points from this understanding that I adopted in my research. These are (i) that in qualitative research, the inquirer can be both observer and participant in a study, (ii) the importance of interpreting the phenomenon of interest in the setting in which it occurs, (iii) the value and importance of researcher reflexivity, and (iv) how qualitative research values the variety of data that are collected to provide richness and textuality. Qualitative researchers are appropriately described as quilt makers (e.g. Wolcott 1995) and interpretive-bricoleurs (Denzin & Lincoln 2005b, p.189), uninterested in prediction and control, but in providing

understanding (Pinnegar & Daynes 2007) and meaning (Van Maanen 1979b), and recognizing plurality in organizational life (Glynn *et al.* 2000).

3.3 Research design

‘Voice is a struggle to figure out how to present the author’s self while simultaneously writing the respondents’ accounts and representing their selves’ (Hertz 1997, p.xi). My purpose in this section is to set out the methodological approaches I adopted to voice my self and capture and interpret others. This section is divided into four parts. In the first, I discuss how I developed the research, and describe the case study organization and how I accessed it. The second and third sections discuss methodological approaches and outline my reflexive ethnographic approach through narrative inquiry. The final section outlines the criteria by which my qualitative research approach might be assessed.

3.3.1 Developing the study

This section describes what motivated me to conduct the research (McAdams *et al.* 2006). I recognize that in constructing this story of PADA’s identities through processes of emplotment (Ricoeur 1983, 1991), I have arranged heterogeneous events and actions into my narrative (Baumeister & Wilson 1996). I also recognize that my text represents only one of the many stories I could have written (Rhodes & Brown 2005). I describe events leading up to starting the research, the organization in which I conducted my ethnography, how I accessed it and why I decided to study organizational identities. The vignettes seek to add depth to the account and are embedded within the text (Humphreys 2005).

In March 2006 I completed an MBA degree at the University of Bath; it had taken four years. The experience was unfulfilling and as I progressed through the course it became something to complete, rather than engage in. A turning point occurred when I attended a module focused on change. As part of this course I was asked to read an article by Tsoukas and Chia (2002): 'On organizational becoming: Rethinking organizational change'. This was not straightforward to understand and after reading and re-reading it, I almost put it down with the intention of giving in. However, I was intrigued both by the title and its postmodern proposition that organizations are continually 'changing' or 'becoming'; indeed, during the course I became absorbed by the idea that '[o]rganizations are in a state of perpetual becoming [and that] change is all there is' (Tsoukas & Chia 2002, p.576).

A further turning point occurred when I attended a lecture given by a professor on issues of power, legitimacy and identity in organizations. No problems were presented and correspondingly no solutions were formulated, (which had been the typical format of lectures), but there was a sophisticated discourse on behaviours and ideas on organizing. These ideas, and the style in which knowledge of them had been articulated, immediately resonated with my experiences of organizations, both in and outside work. After the course, I spent time thinking about these issues and decided to undertake a short-term exploration of organizational identity and learning from a psychodynamic perspective for my final degree dissertation. My enduring memory of undertaking this work was the level of engagement people in my case study organization had with the research, evidenced during interviews I conducted. The concept of organizational identity (Albert & Whetten 1985) captured people's imagination and through conversations with interviewees, my fascination with the

concept and how people engaged with it through their stories absorbed my thoughts during the time I undertook the research. While I had approached the study from a psychodynamic perspective, on collecting narratives from the interviewees two issues emerged: first, the stories told by people revealed multiple understandings of events that had taken place in the organization; secondly, those realities evolved during the course of the interview conversations. Organizational identities, as narrated by individuals, were created dialogically in acts of languaging (Denzin 1995).

In November 2006, after I graduated, I spoke a couple of times with Professor Andrew Brown and subsequently took the decision to apply to the University of Bath to study for an MPhil/PhD. In pursuit of this, I began to write a proposal to study collective identities. At the same time, life at work became complicated and while I was writing the research proposal, I found myself in Whitehall with two difficult meetings to manage.

Vignette: Bacchus and Ariadne

It meant an early morning start from Yorkshire to get to Whitehall for a 9.30 meeting with one of the Minister's special advisors. It turned out to be difficult meeting; there was significant interest in what I was doing and concern about where the findings might lead. The afternoon held an equally awkward meeting with a senior civil servant about the same things. The special advisor and the civil servant's understanding of the issues were distinctly different and both had a knack of arguing their respective cases powerfully. My difficulty was that I needed to steer a course that satisfied both – it wasn't going to be easy.

I emerged onto the Strand after the second meeting and walked down to Trafalgar Square. Quite unusually, I found myself wandering into the National Gallery. I ambled around the individual galleries until I found a comfortable seat and sat down. I was in front of a painting I now know to be by Titian, called 'Bacchus and Ariadne'. Comfortable, I began to daydream.

A guide from the gallery came and stood in front of the painting with a group of tourists (American, I think), all of whom peered intently into the picture. The guide began with a narrative of the artist's life and, still half asleep, I picked up on a few phrases, such as "incomparable portrait painter", "troubled life", "devotion to dramatic style"...

"The painting is a fine example, of what we call 'continuous narrative'" she said. "What we mean by this is that the painting tells many stories at the same time – not a single story."

“Indeed,” she continued, “the painter develops these narratives as you ‘read’ the work: characters and plots are dynamic and show how the will of some characters is exercised over others, at times explicitly, sometimes implicitly”. I opened my eyes, becoming engaged by her discourse and wanting to see for myself what was being described.

“Look how Adriane, betrayed by her lover Theseus, is left powerless to pursue him as his ship sails into the horizon and yet she seems to attract the god Bacchus who comes from a night of merry-making with a group of his mythical friends”.

Still daydreaming I listened to her narrative of the stories she selected from the painting. I looked at the tourists. Some listened intently to the storytelling, each person engaged, (or so it seemed to me) in her portrayal, each engaged in their own sensemaking of the picture; others were reading guidebooks and occasionally looking up at the picture, picking out elements about which they had just read; others chatted to their partner about the painting ... or something else.

As the group moved off, I mused over the event I had just experienced alongside those of my day. Weren’t organizations like this canvas? Peppered with continuous narrative, comprising multiple realities of issues and truths, demonstrating power exercised at each and every turn, voices heard and unheard, different stories for different people; there was the interplay between lived experience and lived textuality. My thoughts drifted off to something else – including whether I should study for a PhD – and I closed my eyes again and went back to my daydream.

I registered formally for the MPhil/PhD in February 2007⁴ and started reading for my literature review; my work-life had also moved on. I have been a civil servant since 1995, predominately within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which administers the Welfare State in Britain. Prior to registering on the course, I became involved, on a part-time basis, in a high profile project within the department called Personal Accounts. This sought to tackle the high and persistent levels of under-saving by people within the UK in private sector pension schemes. The project had emerged as a result of the recommendations of the Pensions Commission’s report, led by Adair Turner (Pensions Commission 2004)⁵. The project had been initiated to create a single occupational trust-based pension scheme for those who saved either inadequately or not at all for their older age, some five million people. I had been advising on how the project should place contracts to run the scheme and investments; in March 2007, I

⁴ I transferred from the University of Bath to the University of Warwick in April 2010 and transferred back in September 2012.

⁵ I discuss this report in detail in the following chapter.

was asked to join the project full time. This involved being seconded out of the DWP to the Personal Accounts Delivery Authority (PADA), which had been set up some months earlier by the Pensions Act (HMG 2007) to advise the DWP on the deliverability of the scheme. PADA gained executive powers with the Assent of a second bill – the Pensions Act (HMG 2008a).

In July 2007 I was seconded to PADA to head up the commercial team. Most of my colleagues in the organization had also come from the DWP, although external consultants and contractors had also been recruited and the organization employed around 40 staff. The DWP had created PADA through legislation (the Pensions Act 2007) and in its first year of life (June 2007 to July 2008) had established it as an advisory organization. A metaphor for the relationship might be that of a mother (DWP) and child (PADA); however, this relationship was only one of many between stakeholders, namely the pension industry, other Government departments, regulators, taxpayers, and employers auto-enrolling their employees on the scheme.

Given that my secondment to PADA coincided with starting work on my literature review and developing my research ideas, it felt appropriate that I should conduct my study from my vantage point within the organization. PADA consisted of an interesting set of characteristics that had the potential to add to the richness of the study. It was a new organization, but had been created by an act of legislation that many of us had a hand in formulating. It consisted of a mix of civil servants, consultants and interims, with public and private sector backgrounds, some with pensions expertise, others not.

Senior colleagues were aware that I had embarked on an MPhil/PhD course and it had been part of my transfer arrangement from the DWP to continue with this work. However, I felt it was necessary to formally ask for approval to access the organization for research purposes; this I did in February 2008 with a note to the new CEO, who had been appointed in November 2007. Approval was granted and with it agreement to my continued funding by the DWP. I began collecting data in April 2008 and finished in April 2010. I then proceeded to analyse the data I had collected.

Vignette: The incident in the lift

I wanted to fetch him myself from reception.

‘He’ was the new CEO of PADA arriving for his second day in the job. He had been recruited to deliver ‘Personal Accounts’ as a safe pair of private sector hands. I had missed his first day and so offering to go from the top of the building and get him through security (before a pass of his own was arranged) seemed a good way of introducing myself. I got into the lift, turned to the mirror and fiddled with my tie, put on a smile and walked out of the lift at the bottom. There was only one man in reception.

“Tim?” I asked with a smile.

He looked, grinned back, shook my hand and said “Yes”.

“I’m Matt,” I said.

We walked to the lift – doors still open. The doors closed and I pushed number 5, cutting across him as I did so. There was a pause before the lift started on its way.

Tim turned and said, “Tell me Matt, why are there so many people that work on this project? I’ve decided it’s too many – way too many – it’s going to have to change.”

I was stunned! I had been expecting a question such as “So what do you do?” or something about the poor condition of the lift – the weather even. But off I went into bat.

“It’s a big job, Tim,” (don’t you realize? I thought), “...it’s very complex, and we have a lot to do to make this a reality.”

“Well I want it to change” he said. “I ran a project this size with thirty people and we all knew what needed to be done and just got on and did it. In fact I ran a retail bank with fewer people than you have here!”⁶

I must have thought about his second attack for a minute and decided to change tack.

⁶ Tim had been the CEO of NatWest prior to its takeover by the Royal Bank of Scotland.

"I'm sure there is much we can learn from that. But, what's driving this project is the need to find a way to solve the problem that millions of people are under-saving for their old age." Not bad, I thought, get the conversation onto a civil servant's 'home ground' – a good old-fashioned social policy objective. I smiled, he looked at me and I looked back at him. Silence...

"Do you know what?" he said. "This isn't as complicated as you lot here make out. It's a simple banking system we need; they're scalable, inexpensive and, what's more, that's what I do – implement banking systems." I felt out-flanked again (I'm not a 'systems' person, you see, and anyway PADA isn't about systems, it's about people and their security in retirement, I thought).

"You may be right," I said. There was another period of silence. We both looked ahead hoping the journey would be over soon. I looked down at my shoes and then across at his and up. He had one of those cartoon-character ties on and I noticed that the narrow end of the tie was poking out from the bottom of the thicker 'V' shaped end. I looked ahead. I felt annoyed by it. The door opened and we walked out into the office.

Tim thanked me. He shook my hand again and said, "Welcome on board, Matt."

I walked back to my desk and clicked my mouse to start up the computer. Looking away from the screen and out of the window I began to reflect on what had been said – it had felt odd – looking back into the office it all now felt different. 'What will become of PADA now?' I wondered.

3.3.2 The ethnographic approach

Consonant with the value that organizational researchers place on being *in situ* to collect, analyse, and interpret narratives most effectively, I adopted an ethnographic approach to my research (Boje 1991a; Gabriel 2000). Ethnography has a long pedigree in the social sciences as a methodology for exploring the sociology of meaning in the field. It has also been used widely to generate organizational theory and investigate behaviour in organizations (e.g. Czarniawska 2001; Gouldner 1954; Humphreys & Brown 2002b; Orlikowski 1996; Roetlisberger *et al.* 1939; Schwartzman 1993; Webb & Weick 1979). My work is an organizational ethnography that is reflexively constructed (Coffey 1999; Davies 1999; Ellis & Bochner 1996; Foley 2002; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995) and given that I use my 'self' as well as 'others' to conduct the investigation, it is also autoethnographic (Ellis & Bochner 1996, 2000; Reed-Danahay 1997, 2001).

Definitions of ethnography

Organizational researchers have utilized the praxis of ethnography in different ways. Hammersley and Atkinson's (1995) definition of ethnography highlights that 'in its most characteristic form ... [it] involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions' (p.1). Similarly, Vickers (2007) argues that it is a description of 'how people lead their routine (or remarkable) lives in their environment, and the beliefs and customs that comprise their common sense about that world' (p.224). These views echo those of Geertz (1973) and others (e.g. Van Maanen 1988) who emphasize the ethnographer's role as the study of a 'tribe', through in-depth participant observation of a culture. Definitions such as these focus upon the ethnographer's attention on observation of the 'other', although I found interesting ideas in the literature about how ethnography illuminates the researcher 'self'.

Rosen (1991) suggests that ethnographers explore themselves while studying others and this view is shared by other scholars (e.g. Coffey 1999; Goulet 1994; Turner 1994), all of whom suggest that writing ethnography is an act of writing the researcher's own identity. Humphreys *et al.* (2003) make a similar point and in their comparison of ethnography and jazz suggest that ethnography can be understood as a 'brokering of the conflicting demands of a performance in which the identity of the self as well as the 'other' are jointly explored' (p.7). Key is the acceptance that ethnographic researchers cannot write themselves out of the text in the rational way that positivists demand (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994; cf. Gergen 1994; Tedlock 1991). Indeed, as Bell (1999) puts it, 'in organizational ethnography the interpreter-observer is no neutral observer, no fly-on-the-wall ... [R]esearch is always

shaped by the researcher's own personal values ... [and] political and moral principles' (p.17). Similarly, as Humphreys *et al.* (2003) argue, the ethnographer must recognize the identity-constitutive nature of their work, albeit that the identity of the researcher and participant may not remain constant over the timeframe of the research (Visweswaran 1994).

Ethnography and reflexivity

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) argue that reflexivity is a 'crucial component of the complete ethnography' (p.192), providing an interpretation of interpretation (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2000; Olsen 2011). Moreover, reflexivity offers an insight into the researcher's experiences and can be 'highly particular and hauntingly personal' (Van Maanen 1988, p.ix). In recent years, reflexivity has become an important issue in ethnographic studies, to the extent that reflexive ethnography is now a genre in its own right (Coffey 1999; Davies 1999; Etherington 2004; Foley 2002; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). It is also aligned closely to genres of autoethnographic writing (e.g. Ellis 1998; Ellis & Bochner 1996, 2000) and related texts, such as self-stories (Denzin 1989), first-person accounts (Ellis 1998), vignettes (Humphreys 2005) and ethnographic memoirs (Rath 2012; Tedlock 1991).

Hertz (1997) writes that conducting reflexive research is concerned with an 'ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment' (p.viii). Others (e.g. Humphreys 2005) suggest that reflexivity is a method of research that emphasizes 'the turning back of an inquiry or a theory or a text onto its own formative possibilities' (p.840). Holland (1999) argues that reflexivity is an important process as the researcher can expose underlying assumptions on which arguments are built. It is

through reflexivity that my ethnography offered the opportunity to question organizational claims of truth, construct interpretations of my field experience, and allowed me to question how I arrived at these interpretations (Clifford & Marcus 1986; Rabinow, 1986; Van Maanen 1988; cf. Seale 1999). Adopting a reflexive approach also offered the opportunity to explore my own epistemological position (Johnson & Cassell 2001). Denzin (2003) remarks that ‘the reflexive ethnographer becomes the guiding presence in the ethnographic text’ (p.259) (see also Woolgar 1988). Callaway’s (1992) understanding of reflexivity emphasizes how such an approach is a radical way of facing the political dimensions of constructing knowledge and fieldwork and that ‘[r]eflexivity becomes a continuing mode of self-analysis and political awareness’ (cited in Hertz 1997, p.33). Similarly, scholars have argued how reflexivity and the self are key fieldwork tools (Van Maanen *et al.* 1989) and that using reflexivity in research consequently reveals both the self that is ‘brought’ to the field by the researcher and the self that is ‘created’ in the field (Reinharz 1997).

My work is also autoethnographic as I used my ‘self’, as well as others, in the construction of this thesis. This has been accomplished primarily by providing my organizational identity-relevant narratives and constructing my own discourse on events that I observed. I reviewed a number of definitions of autoethnography that scholars have suggested (Boyle & Parry 2007; Ellis 2004; Ellis & Bochner 1996, 2000; Geertz 1983; Hayano 1979; Jones 2005; Neumann 1996; Spry 2001). Ellis (2004) describes autoethnography as connecting the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social. In particular, I found Jones’s (2005) perspectives on autoethnography illuminating:

‘A text present. Demanding attention and participation. Implicating all involved. Refusing closure or categorization. Witnessing

experience and testifying about power without foreclosure – of pleasure, of difference, or efficacy.’ (p.765)

In line with Jones’s (2005) views, an advantage of this approach was that it allowed my own interactions, relationships and emotional states, while in the field, to be placed centre stage within the ethnography, rather than consigned to their traditional discreet place in acknowledgements or forewords (Angrosino 2005; Reinharz 1997). It also provided me with a way of observing how selves are constructed, including my own self, and how they are ‘disclosed and implicated in the telling of personal narratives as well as how these narratives move in and change the contexts of their telling’ (Jones 2005, p.767). Indeed, the approach also offered insights into how the emotions expressed in the narratives that I heard illuminate links between power and identity – issues core to my research.

Overview of ethnographic tools

To gain a multi-dimensional understanding of a social setting, the ethnographer can choose from different types of data collection tools. I chose semi-structured interviews with organizational participants as one source of data (cf. 3.4.1), but complemented this with three further tools. The first was undertaking an in-depth analysis of key organizational events (an industry day PADA held in January 2009 and the organization’s move to new offices at St. Dunstan’s House) and specifically the identity-relevant narratives articulated during and after these events. The second was a diary I kept for a year (from April 2008 to April 2009). The third was first-person accounts (Ellis 1998) in the form of personal narratives or autoethnographic vignettes (Boyle & Parry 2007; Coffey 1999; Humphreys 2005) which are embedded throughout the thesis and are reflections of my experiences during my immersion in PADA,

observing things first hand: ‘observation of culture in situ’ (Denscombe 1995, p.184). As scholars contend, vignettes provide contextual richness to ethnography (Humphreys 2005), are valuable resources to support researchers’ sensemaking (Boyle & Parry 2007; Coffey 1999), afford critical inquiry (Snyder-Young 2011), enmesh the researcher’s biography with those stories told by others, and place the researcher ‘on both sides of the “keyhole”’ (Denzin 1995, p.18) (see also Learmonth & Humphreys 2011).

3.3.3 Narrative inquiry

As Barthes (1986) comments, ‘No help for it: language is always on the side of power; to speak is to exercise a will to power: in the space of speech, no innocence, no safety’ (p.311). Organizational narratives form the material for my exploration of collective identities and power in PADA. In this section I define narrative inquiry, discuss my narrative approach and highlight the benefits and constraints I encountered adopting this method of inquiry.

A consequence of the linguistic turn in management and organizational theory (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000a, 2000b; Chia & King 2001; Deetz 2003; cf. Donaldson 1992) and its repudiation of positivist inquiry, is the idea that language does not have the capability to mirror (Alvesson 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery 1996; Rorty 1979) or neutrally represent the world (Foucault 1980), but instead ‘actively creates and powerfully shapes it’ (Kornberger *et al.* 2006, p.13). My research takes as its foundation and rationale for adopting a narrative methodology to explore organizational identities within this case study both the above and a conception of organizations as discursive spaces (Brown & Humphreys 2006; Brown *et al.* 2005;

Chreim 2007; Fletcher *et al.* 2005; Kornberger *et al.* 2006) in which organizational identities are constructed in and through narratives (Brown 2006; Brown & Humphreys 2006; Chreim 2005). Brown (2006) remarks that organizational identity informed by the study of organizational narrative ‘provides an additional interpretive lens ... assisting scholars in their efforts to develop insightful theory’ (p.732). Exploring organizational identities through narrative has also offered scholars ideas about how organizational realities are created and legitimized (Mumby 1987), how they represent ‘politically motivated production of a certain way of perceiving the world’ (Mumby 1987, p.114) and can be taken as persuasive claims of organizational truth (Witten 1993). Indeed, narrated organizational identities can be considered ‘complexes of in-progress stories and story fragments, which are in a perpetual state of *becoming*, and suffused with power’ (Brown 2006, p.732). It is such narratives and fragmented ‘antenarratives’ (Boje 2001) that my study set out to capture, analyse and represent in order to understand how they served the hegemonic claims of their authors in PADA.

Scholars (e.g. Weick & Browning 1986) emphasize how narrative inquiry allows researchers to get closer to the meaning of a phenomenon, understand how narratives are deployed as forms of knowledge, interpret them as sensemaking mechanisms (Boje 1995; Bruner 1990; Weick 1985; Polkinghorne 1988), and explore how narrative plots (Bal 1997) become real to members of the organization through their articulation. If identities in organizations are continuously written and rewritten, as Chreim (2007) posits, narrated organizational identities can be conceived as temporal, reflexive and polyphonic constructs. At the individual level, Lieblich *et al.* (1998) make the point that ‘the story *is* one’s identity ... [W]e know or discover ourselves and reveal

ourselves to others by the stories we tell' (p.7). The literary theorists Bennett and Royle (1995) propose this too, arguing that not only do we tell stories, but they tell us. Given the ability of narratives to provide a lens for researchers on issues of identity, organization, power and claims of 'truth', for example, a study of organizational narratives seemed a valuable methodological choice in conducting my study.

Lieblich *et al.* (1998), Rhodes and Brown (2005) and Riessman (1993) in their histories of narrative research highlight how this methodology has become increasingly popular in the study of organizations. Bruner (1990, 1991) suggests how narrative inquiry provides researchers with a new mode of knowing; others, (Lieblich *et al.* 1998) argue that narrative inquiry is a response mechanism to dominant positivist research in science. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) highlight how narrative inquiry provides an alternative way of thinking about experience. As Connelly and Clandinin (2006) note, '[n]arrative inquiry, the study of experience as story ... is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience ... [T]o use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study' (p.375). Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) outline how narrative inquiry 'begins with an ontology of experience' (p.44), where such a concept of reality is relational, temporal, continuous, and emphasizes pluralism and subjectivity (Lieblich *et al.* 1998). Scholars (e.g. Clandinin & Rosiek 2007) note that pivotal to conducting narrative research successfully is thinking about events happening over time (Bruner 1986; Gubrium & Holstein 1997; Laslett 1999) and how each event has a past, present and an implied future, namely, understanding narratives as temporal (Ricoeur 1988). Indeed, a narrative approach encourages the researcher to ask certain questions (Brown 2006), such as:

- (i) What is the motivation of the narrator?
- (ii) Why is the content of the narrative important within the context it is being made?
- (iii) To whom does the narrator address his narrative?

The consequence of answering these questions is not only that narrative inquiry permits a deeper level of interaction and understanding (Pinnegar & Daynes 2007), but also that it offers the researcher material which s/he may analyse reflexively.

3.3.4 Research criteria

Some qualitative researchers have emphasized the need for authors to lay bare the criteria that guides their work (e.g. Bochner 2001; Hammersley 1992; Henwood & Pigeon 1992; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Madill *et al.* 2000). Scholars argue that specifying the evaluation criteria by which a study is designed to be assessed can mitigate criticisms from positivists who sometimes regard qualitative inquiry as ‘merely subjective assertion supported by unscientific method’ (Ballinger 2006, p.253). Whilst noting such arguments, my work is framed within an interpretive paradigm with relativist ontological and subjective epistemological commitments and this suggests I accept that there is no external reality other than that which acts of languaging place on it. What ‘reality’, therefore, can this work be measured against? The criteria I outline here (see Table 1 below) represent ideas from the literature which I perceive as important aspects of ‘good’ research from scholars writing within the same or similar paradigms. Given this, the concepts represent ideas I wanted to ensure were considered throughout my research.

Table 1 Research criteria

Concepts	Explanation	References
Credibility of the representation of the stories told	Degree to which the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysis and interpretation make sense to readers, the researcher and the participants; researcher's interpretations are well argued to the reader and the participants. 	Lincoln and Guba (1985) Hammersley (1992)
Dependability of the data sources	Degree to which the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> research provides an audit trail (i.e. capture of data, its documentation and presentation). 	Lincoln and Guba (1985) Eisenhardt (1989)
Extent to which the research is reflexively constructed	Degree to which the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> researcher is acknowledged, understood and accounted for in the research, including their voice. 	Lincoln and Guba (1985) Henwood and Pigeon (1992) Brown (2006) Hertz (1997) Olsen (2011)
Richness of the account	Degree to which the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the reader can enter the researcher's account vicariously. 	Polkinghorne (1983) Geertz (1973) Blauner (1987) Van Maanen (1988)
Understanding of plurality	Degree to which the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> text adequately explains the differences between the researcher's interpretations of those of the organizational members. 	Henwood and Pigeon (1992) Glynn <i>et al.</i> (2000)

3.4 Narrative management

Josselson (2007) suggests that '[n]arrative research consists of obtaining and then reflecting on people's lived experience and, unlike objectifying and aggregating forms of research, is inherently a relational endeavor' (p.537). In this section I discuss how, through the relationships I developed with the study's participants, I collected and analysed narratives. I describe the sources of narrative and outline how stories were captured, transcribed and stored. Additionally, I discuss how narratives were analysed including the various analytical approaches I employed. Finally, I outline how my analysis is structured in the following chapters.

3.4.1 Collecting narratives

Czarniawska (2007) comments that ‘any researcher who cares to spend some time in an organization, listening to what is told and reading some of its textual productions, will encounter ... a contemporary and historical repertoire of stories’ (p.388). I drew from three sources of narratives to analyse participants’ understandings of the organization’s identities, namely: (i) data collected from semi-structured interviews with selected members of PADA; (ii) data collected to analyse two organizational events; (iii) a diary I kept from April 2008 to April 2009. Each source is discussed below. Additionally, I collected information from PADA’s website, reports published, and press releases, as well as emails either written by me or that were addressed and copied to me. Consonant with my autoethnographic approach, I captured data at every opportunity in order to understand the ‘role stories play in the drama of organizational power and resistance’ (Czarniawska 2007, p.390)⁷.

Data from semi-structured interviews

Interviews represented one method through which I captured voices of PADA’s identities. Silverman (1993) describes semi-structured interviews as ‘situated narratives’ (p.108), whilst others (e.g. Fontana & Frey 2005; Wengraf 2001) refer to them as negotiated texts. Gubrium and Holstein (1998) conceptualize interviews as contemporary means of storytelling and as mutual accomplishments between the researcher and the researched. Indeed, as Rogers (2007) argues, ‘[w]hat a researcher pursues in an interview depends on the understanding of that researcher’ (p.103). Alvesson (2003) remarks that ‘the interview ... is [a] socially and linguistically

⁷ I made a decision when designing the research not to use key informants as I thought this might jeopardize the ‘good faith’ of those authorizing the research (Fontana & Frey 2005; Huber & Power 1985).

complex situation' (p.14), a view echoed by scholars who suggest that the interviewer examines 'not only ... the participant's social experience but also ... multiple truths and shifting identity positions' (Rogers 2007, p.102).

I recognize that the interviews I conducted cannot be regarded as neutral data given that I was historically and contextually located as an employee of the organization and as such had motives, feelings and biases which I brought to the field (Scheurich 1995). As I knew many members of the organization, it would have been most straightforward to ask these people for their stories about PADA. However, I chose who to interview by selecting a cross section of members of the organization, including contractors and consultants, as well as permanent employees and seconded civil servants. I categorized these people into three groups: senior managers, middle managers and junior colleagues. These categorizations were based on their civil service grade, or their position within the organization's hierarchy or within the consultancy firm to which they belonged. By April 2008 there were 22 senior staff, 84 middle managers, and 34 junior staff, although this changed considerably over the period of my study. I chose broadly an equal number of people from each management tier group. For each interview I started with a standard list of questions (see Appendix 1) although all interviews evolved as 'complex interactions' and questions I asked developed from the dialogue of the interview⁸ (Alvesson 2003, p.19). As Alvesson (2003) remarks, 'the interplay between two people, with their gender, ages, professional background, personal appearances, and ethnicities, puts heavy imprints on the accounts produced' (p.19). In the interviews I presented myself primarily as a 'researcher' and not as a

⁸ Before commencing the interviews, I tested the questions with two close colleagues as a pilot exercise and made changes to my approach and style in light of their feedback (Stake 1995).

colleague and employee because I wanted the interview to be distinct from meetings on work issues.

I conducted 60 interviews between 28 August 2008 and 30 April 2010 (although 57 interviews were completed between 28 August 2008 and 9 July 2009). An index of transcripts detailing first names, job type and level, date of interview, location and length is outlined in Appendix 2. The total time of the interviews was 34 hours and 46 minutes; the average length of the interview was 35 minutes and 20 seconds, the longest 53 minutes and 7 seconds, and the shortest 18 minutes and 49 seconds. The total number of words transcribed was 319,299; the longest transcription was 10,249 words, the shortest 2,495 words. Each interview was recorded onto a digital file and individual interviews were downloaded onto a non-networked computer to mitigate the possibility that the transcripts could be read by others. The interviews were professionally transcribed by a private sector company and securely stored electronically.

Data collected to analyse two organizational events

In addition to utilizing interviews as a way of collecting narratives from individual members of the organization, I used interviews to capture data about two organizational events that are the subject of analysis in chapter 6. I wanted to analyse organizational events in relation to identity narratives because they presented an opportunity to explore the interaction of many ‘voices’ at one time. The first event I explore in chapter 6 is an industry day that PADA held for prospective suppliers of a large contract it subsequently awarded. In advance of the event, I agreed with the management team in PADA that I could record it for research purposes: the total

recording time was 5 hours and 14 minutes and the total number of words transcribed was 26,085. Again the digital recording was professionally transcribed, albeit by the professional firm of lawyers working directly for PADA⁹. In addition to the transcribed text, I made field notes prior to the event and afterwards of observations made during it. The second event explored within this chapter was PADA's move to St. Dunstan's House; the data for this were sourced predominantly from the interviews.

My diary

A further resource that I used to capture identity narratives was a diary I kept between 1 April 2008 and 1 April 2009, with entries for every day worked. As an employee of the organization and almost always in either the London or Leeds offices where PADA was based during this period, it seemed valuable to make a note of conversations, interesting e-mails and events observed (Wolcott 1995). The diary also offered me an opportunity to write reflexively about subjects. Within the diary I embedded copies of emails and other documents, such as corporate plans and strategy documents to supplement the topics. In total, the number of entries was 201, totalling 35,056 words: the longest entry was 595 and the shortest was just 7 words¹⁰.

3.4.2 Analysis and representation of narratives

In this section, I discuss how the narrative data that I captured were analysed and are represented in the following chapters of this thesis. Scholars (e.g. Boje 2001; Lieblich *et al.* 1998) outline various methods of analysis that can be employed to explore narratives. I decided to use two methods: theme and deconstruction analysis. I

⁹ The decision to ask the lawyers, DLA Piper, to transcribe this event was due to the potentially commercial nature of the question and answer sessions held across the event. This was the approach agreed with PADA management.

¹⁰ The word count does not include emails or publications attached to each entry.

employed these analytical tools to present the data in the following chapters. My analysis is presented in three chapters. Chapter 5 explores the narrative material I collected in participant interviews about their understanding of the organization's identities. Through the identification of themes from the interviews, I organize my data using the five themes of Brown's (2006) conceptual framework for exploring collective identities: reflexivity, voice, plurivocity, temporality, and fictionality. Chapter 6 examines the narratives collected from interviews and the transcript of the recording of the industry day, as well as my own observation notes made prior to, during and after the two organizational events I explore. This chapter employs a mix of theme and deconstruction analysis and focuses on the work of Mumby (1987) and Rosen (1985) in the reconstruction of these events. Chapter 7 explores my own stories, captured predominately from my diary, which presents themes and observations I made while in the field. While each chapter focuses on a different narrative genre, my aim is to explore how identity narratives can be read as devices of power which are reflexively produced, multi-voiced, quasi-fictional and that change over time.

Theme analysis

Boje (2001) remarks that 'theme analysis is a respected ... well established and widely used method of qualitative analysis' (p.122). This analytical approach seemed an appropriate method to investigate identity narratives as it offered the opportunity of identifying the dualities within the narratives I collected. I recognize that I could have taken either a deductive and etic approach, in which I would have imposed my own categories, or themes, onto the narratives, or an inductive emic approach (Spradley 1980). I generally adopted the latter, developing my categories directly from the stories that interviewees themselves told or that I had recorded myself. My aim was to follow

Boje's (2001) advice which, arguing against taxonomy, suggests that research should 'trace stories, to see how story themes are embedded contextually in folds and refolds' (p.126).

Deconstruction

My approach was influenced by deconstruction which I employed to analyse data collected from interviews, my diary and other material (Derrida 1995). Martin (1990) suggests that deconstruction is an 'analytic strategy that exposes in a systematic way multiple ways a text can be interpreted...[It] is able to reveal ideological assumptions in a way that is particularly sensitive to the suppressed interest of members of disempowered marginalized groups' (p.340). Similarly, Cooper (1989) makes the point that the object of deconstruction is to 'reveal the ambivalences or more accurately the self-contradictions and double binds that lie latent in any text' (p.481).

I used deconstruction as an analytic tool, in particular in relation to my own diary narrative, as this offered the opportunity for me to question the 'taken for granted, that seemingly self-evident and natural, in order to demonstrate that it has a history and that it was institutionalized at a very precise moment, with a very precise intention' (Kornberger *et al.* 2006, p.16). The deconstruction of my own stories also shed light upon personal predilections towards the organization's identities and allowed me to appreciate the narratives I heard from colleagues. Additionally, using this analytical approach presented the opportunity to question the motivations behind my own text so that I could 'analyse the language games that shape reality and ... open up space for different concepts and perceptions' (Kornberger *et al.* 2006, p.77). Essential to this approach is the belief that every story – including my own text – 'excludes' and, as

such, stories are ‘self-deconstructing on their own’ (Boje 2001, p.18) (see also Martin 1990). Indeed, as Boje (2001) remarks, ‘deconstructionists argue that each reading is an active disturbance and a metaphor-projection by a reader that constructs the narrative-objective’ (p.18). In practical terms I analysed the diary in chronological order, and identified specific passages from it that pieced together forced narratives regarding a particular subject. My primary aim of using deconstruction analysis of my own text was to engage in a reflexive exercise to ‘resuscitate the subordinate terms, to elevate them, to amplify the silent voices in order to problematize the dominant understanding and rather than create a new hierarchy, reconstruct a duality of awareness within conventional consciousness’ (Linstead 1993, p.69).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological choices I have made to construct my work. These determined how I represented my own as well as other voices in the research. I discussed the interpretive paradigm in which the research is framed and how I conceive reality and knowledge as socially constructed. Crucial in the formulation of my research design was building the ability to explore identity-relevant organizational narratives as plural, reflexive constructions which evolve over time and in doing so I highlighted the intertextual and dialogical nature of such narratives.

Denzin (1995) remarks that narratives ‘are an emergent cultural form, [and are] ... fragmented, moral texts [that] mediate and connect persons to culture, history, and ongoing group life ... [T]heir production and interpretation require a new version of the enlightened eye’ (p.18). Positioned with the vantage point of an employee within PADA, I chose to conduct a reflexive ethnography. As I capture my own identity

narratives, the research is also semi autoethnographic. I described how I collected other narratives, such as those from semi-structured interviews with colleagues and the identity narratives within two organizational events. I described the instability, fluidity of these narratives: indeed, as Denzin (1995) remarks, such texts represent a ‘multi-perspectival epistemology that thickens and makes more complex the very processes that qualitative researchers work to capture and re-present in their reflexive texts’ (p.10).

CHAPTER 4

THE PERSONAL ACCOUNTS DELIVERY AUTHORITY

We know already that the scheme itself will be prepared by the Personal Accounts Delivery Authority and handed to the trustee corporation on a plate, as it were. Shortly after that – we still do not know how shortly and I suppose that yet again the Minister will say that he does not know – PADA will leave the scene and become otiose.

(Lord Skelmersdale, noted in Hansard 2008)

4.1 Introduction

The opposition peer Lord Skelmersdale's comments¹¹ were made just eight months after the creation of PADA and before the organization had been granted executive powers to do its job: his words foretold PADA's demise before its role had begun. While I do not dwell on this point, this chapter should be read with it in mind: PADA was conceived and constructed as a temporary organization.

This chapter offers an overview of the organization and provides the context for the following three chapters that analyse the narrative data I collected: it is divided into two sections. In the first, I outline the Government's response to the UK's ageing population, the creation of the Pensions Commission, the passing of legislation to enable the Government's policy for Private Pension Reform, and the creation of PADA to lead this work. The second section describes the organization, its 'mission' and principles, the people who worked in it and key milestones in its plan (see Appendix 3, p. 316, for a list of participants and organizations referred to throughout this chapter). Additionally, vignettes seek to enrich my account (Miles & Huberman 1994) (see also Humphreys 2005).

¹¹ Quotation taken from Hansard and noted during the Committee Stage of the Pensions Bill in July 2008.

4.2 The Government's response to an ageing UK population

According to National Statistics, the effect of the 'baby boom' after World War II and the decrease in the level of mortality since the late 1950s has resulted in an increase in the number of older people in England and Wales (HMG 2008b). Indeed, the percentage of the UK population aged below 16 has been in decline since 1995 to the extent that this is now lower than the percentage of those at state pensionable age. It is forecast that the combination of these factors will result in the doubling of the population aged 65 years and above between 2000 and 2050. Such a demographic change presents government with a problem: how should the state and private savings systems ensure financial security for people in their retirement? This vexing question should be set against an underlying downward trend in private sector employer pension contributions since 1980, with a marked shift away from defined benefits (where an individual is guaranteed a set sum on retirement based on their final salary) to a less generous, defined contribution-based saving system (where the individual, post annuitization, receives a pension based on the market value of their savings). In other words, since the 1980s the underlying level of funded pensions has fallen rather than increasing to meet the demographic changes. If this continues, some in the UK will have poor and inadequate savings to support their retirement and will rely increasingly on state provision.

4.2.1 The Pensions Commission

In response to both an ageing population and a decline in the quantum of retirement savings in private pension schemes, the Labour administration (1997–2010) set up the Pensions Commission to review the UK private pension system and long-term savings. The Government appointed three pension experts to the Commission: Adair Turner,

the private sector industry boss; Professor John Hills, an academic; Jeannie Drake, a senior union leader. The Commission was wound up in 2005, but during its tenure produced two reports, the first in October 2004 and the second in June 2005 (Pensions Commission 2004, 2005). In the first, the Commission concluded that due to an ageing population, declining birth rate and inadequate pensions saving, direct governmental intervention in the private sector pension provision market was needed. In its second report it recommended increasing the pensionable age and the creation of a National Pension Saving Scheme (NPSS) to enable those who currently do not save to do so. An important element of the second report was the proposed introduction of auto-enrolment: a process whereby employees not currently saving in their company's pension scheme or entering the employment market would be enrolled automatically by their employer in a 'qualified' retirement saving scheme. Auto-enrolment was a direct response to middle-to-low income earners currently under-represented in the private sector system (see Banks *et al.* 2002). Following the production of this report the Commission was disbanded, leaving the Government to respond to their recommendations.

4.2.2 The Government's response to the Pensions Commission's reports

The Government's response came in its first White Paper in May 2006 (DWP 2006a). In the foreword Tony Blair remarked 'we ... have to address, like countries across the world, the long-term challenges and opportunities of an ageing society ... [We] need to put in place an affordable and sustainable pension system which meets the needs of generations to come and encourages people to save for their retirement' (DWP 2006a, p.iii). In the paper, the Government set out its 'bold blueprint', as the Prime Minister put it, for pension reform (DWP 2006a). The Government broadly agreed with the

findings of the Pensions Commission¹² and proposed the creation of a new pensions scheme in the form of personal accounts (the new name the Government gave the Commission's NPSS) that would provide an opportunity for up to eight million UK workers who were not saving for their retirement to do so through a high-quality, low-cost savings vehicle. The key features of the scheme would be that from 2012 all employees would contribute 4% within a band of earnings of between £5,000 and £33,000¹³ a year, that their employer would make a minimum matched contribution of 3%, and a further 1% would be contributed in the form of tax relief, representing minimum savings of 8% of earnings for every employee in the UK. Further, the White Paper proposed that the Pensions Commission's recommendation of auto-enrolment would be implemented. Thus, every employee would be automatically enrolled into a pension scheme, including the Government's own proposed personal accounts scheme.

The Government asked the pension industry, employers and their representatives to respond to these proposals for reform. A press release from the influential Pensions Policy Institute said:

‘[A]uto-enrolment into private pension provision has potential advantages which should lead to an increase in the number of people saving for their retirement. But the White Paper may set unrealistic expectations for what Personal Accounts can achieve.’ (PPI 2006)

Elsewhere, however, broad support was articulated and a narrative of consensus between the existing pensions industry and other stakeholders, such as the TUC and CBI, began to emerge in favour of the reforms. Encouraged, the Government published its second White Paper in December 2006 (DWP 2006b) in which it advocated setting

¹² Albeit with notable dissent from the Chancellor, Gordon Brown.

¹³ These figures were subject to indexation per annum.

up a non-departmental public body, called the Personal Accounts Delivery Authority (PADA) to deliver (procure and implement) the personal accounts scheme by 2012, when the reforms were to be enacted. PADA's remit was also to work with the existing pension industry to ensure the personal accounts scheme would complement and not replace existing good pension provision.

4.2.3 The Enabling Retirement Savings Programme

To enable reform, the Government undertook two activities. First, it established the Enabling Retirement Savings Programme (ERSP) to coordinate and manage the reform. ERSP was set up within the DWP, but the Pensions Regulator (PR) and PADA were given responsibility to deliver the most significant elements of the reform. The PR was responsible for the introduction of auto-enrolment and ensuring employers enrolled their employees and made the appropriate contributions to their pension savings. PADA was responsible for the implementation of the new national, trust-based pension scheme (personal accounts), leaving the DWP responsible for developing the Government's policy, communications and governance of the overall programme. Caroline Rookes, the DWP director responsible for private pension reform in the civil service, led ERSP.

The second action was the Government's preparation of legislation to enact its reforms. The first, which became the Pensions Act 2007, received Royal Assent in July 2007, made reforms to the State Pension and set up PADA to advise the Government on the deliverability of personal accounts (HMG 2007). The second, the Pensions Act 2008, in November, laid the foundation for auto-enrolment, the employer's duty to contribute to their employees' savings, and the legal framework for the pension

account scheme, and empowered PADA to deliver the personal accounts scheme (HMG 2008a). Thus, in sum, it had taken the Government from 2002 to November 2008 to create the legal framework within which their private pension reforms could be progressed.

Vignette: Curtains?

Thursday morning, 23 April 2009.

We were called to PADA's CEO's office – the management team, plus one or two others. It was the 'morning after the night before'. Yesterday had been the Budget and everyone, including the Government, acknowledged it as one of the most difficult that any Chancellor had delivered in years – centuries even, so the papers said. He was in trouble: the Government needed to borrow £175 billion that year to deliver its business.

Tim, the CEO, got his black notebook out and undid the elastic ribbon that bound the book together, opened the book at his notes and called the meeting to order like a 'priest starting a sermon'. Those around the table took a while to be silent.

"I've just come off the phone with Caroline Rookes... I have some worrying news." Silence.

"On Monday evening the Treasury went on a 'raid' looking for programmes across Whitehall to cull. At 9 o'clock that evening this programme was on the list of those to be pulled from the Government's agenda. Tuesday morning, after the Secretary of State had argued his case for it to continue with the Chancellor, the programme was to be delayed by two years, effectively 'kicking it into touch'. On Tuesday afternoon, change again; it was out of the 'cull' and back on track. But on the condition that we have to ensure we will not publicize what we are doing and comply with a review they intend to conduct on the programme."

The meeting was deathly silent. Helen sat across the table from me and I could almost hear the cogs turning in her head. She said: "We have to build some alliances here in order to deal with this situation. Why don't you go and speak to Phil and Leigh (the pensions director general and permanent secretary in the department) and get their take on it. We have to find out what is fuelling their concern. That is if it's more than just money. If so we need to find a way to silence it."

Simon, another senior director, spoke next, "This is typical isn't it? I think PADA should just continue on the path we have planned – we are a self-financing scheme so the money shouldn't be an issue for them."

Tim interjected, "That's a fine statement, Simon, but we have to play ball – at least officially – with these people."

The others, including myself, kept quiet. I pondered what the news really meant (putting my civil service hat on). Was it 'curtains' for the programme... possibly? After all this work, I thought, to be snuffed out with one blow. And then I remembered its politics; to the 'Treasury gods' we are just one of many large projects, in the middle of an economic crisis. So what if the project ends? It's just another policy that wouldn't go anywhere. I'm a civil servant. I'm used to this – 'been there, done that before'. And yet there was something that made me feel so angry about it this time.

4.3 The Personal Accounts Delivery Authority

In the two following sections I describe the key activities PADA undertook to meet its obligations under the Pensions Acts 2007 and 2008 and provide a description of the people that worked in PADA and how they were organized.

4.3.1 Key activities and milestones

The Pensions Act 2007 created PADA as an advisory body to the DWP. At this point, the organization recruited its first three employees: a chairman, Paul Myners, a non-executive director, Jeannie Drake¹⁴ and its chief executive, Tim Jones. The first task of the CEO was to set up a review of the work that had been done in DWP to deliver the scheme. To lead this review Tim recruited an independent consultant Simon Richards, with whom he had worked before on projects in the private sector. Simon's task was to review the plan and determine whether this was deliverable and had been constructed coherently by the DWP. Simon interviewed most people within the programme, including myself, and I recall this as a long and in-depth meeting in which he examined every part of my work, keen to understand how it all fitted together. Within weeks his report recommended that the programme's plan was neither feasible nor appropriately resourced: as a result he had little confidence it could be achieved. PADA retained Simon's services to lead a re-planning exercise across the whole organization that took five months (between September 2007 and January 2008). It was a difficult period for the new organization as much of the work that had been on-going stopped as the organization focused on the single task of achieving a baseline plan. It was during this time that the programme management office grew significantly, from three people to well over twenty, almost overnight. It was also a period in which

¹⁴ Previously one of the Pensions Commissioners.

many people were expected to work through the night, around the clock to ‘achieve the plan’. Two offices were set aside as planning ‘war rooms’, as they were known, with only planners and Simon allowed access. Some of us were asked in on occasion, to check on certain dates, but were never allowed to see the whole plan, just sections of it to comment on. There was a phrase that resonated around the organization that ‘no-one can rest until the plan is done’. It was a time, for many of us, marked by uncertainty and anxiety. By the end of January 2008 a baseline plan was produced. For some, the new plan felt similar to the old one, the differences being that the set of key dates had ‘moved to the right’ by six months and the plan looked more complete and professionally presented. The plan’s production ended phase 0 of the programme and heralded the start of phase 1.

Phase 1 focused the organization on achieving all the activities necessary to start the procurement exercise for the services that would run the personal accounts scheme. A key event during this period was Royal Assent of the second bill, the Pensions Act 2008, which set the legal framework for personal accounts and gave executive powers to PADA to deliver the scheme. Assent came on 27 November 2008 and signalled, for many people, a significant change in the standing and status of the organization. This event was closely followed by an external review of the programme, conducted by the Treasury, called the Major Projects Review Group (MPRG). This had been set up by Government to review the top ten largest and most complex programmes across Whitehall to mitigate the risk of failing technology-led initiatives. The process involved a series of interviews with senior members of the team followed by group interviews. The result of this review was that, broadly, the project was on course to be successful and, most pertinently to me, a recommendation that we be prepared and

commence the procurement for the scheme – our ‘hunt’ for a supplier to administrate the personal accounts scheme.

The start of the procurement signalled the end of phase 1 of the programme and the start of the second phase. The procurement commenced with the publication of an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) advertisement, in other words, a request made to suppliers across Europe and the globe to express interest in entering the competition to become the administrator. This advertisement was issued in January 2009 and was followed, later that month, by an industry day, held in Westminster, attended by 76 suppliers worldwide who were potentially interested in bidding. This event is the focus of chapter 6. While the bidding process continued, the other significant event during phase 2 of the programme, which coincided with PADA’s first birthday, was the publication of the Investment Consultation, which suggested ways in which the funds collected from future members of the scheme would be invested. This was released in mid-2009, at the time that I ceased data collection for my thesis. Late in this phase of the programme a further MPRG review was conducted by the Treasury in preparation for awarding the administration contract; once successfully through this review, the awarding of the contract for administration of the scheme signalled the end of phase 2 of the programme and the start of the building and development of the scheme by the contractor¹⁵. At the point that the contract was awarded, PADA ceased to exist, a winding up order being agreed by Parliament. PADA was replaced by a Trustee Corporation comprising twelve Trustees responsible for assuring the remaining build of the scheme and its launch in April 2011, prior to the onset of employee duties in October 2012. Most people working in PADA migrated to the Trustee Corporation.

¹⁵ It was during this time that I left PADA in May 2010.

Vignette: Tim's stand-ups

Every Wednesday afternoon, Tim (PADA's CEO) 'hosted' a 30 minute stand-up. Invitations were sent each month so that the events were fixed in everyone's diary and, to ensure attendance, 15 minutes prior to the event a reminder email was issued encouraging people to 'come along'. Mostly I tried to avoid them, but when caught in the traffic of people migrating from their rooms into the main room on the 3rd floor I found myself drifting along.

Tim was always there before everyone else. He stood in exactly the same place each week, near the communications team. Two rituals then took place. The first was getting people from Newcastle and Leeds on the line (they would dial in, you see). When the dialling was done, Tim would ask: "Is everyone from Leeds with me?"

The 'Leeds people' would raise a feeble cheer. Tim would reply, "Leeds you can do better than that," until the Leeds people shouted louder. Then Tim would say the same to the 'Newcastle people'. Some soul usually replied "Yep" or "Yo". Silence. Tim did not respond to "Yo".

The second ritual, taking place while the performance of the first played out, was the jostling for position in the room. This is what I called the 'sitting-on-the-desk-as-near-to-Tim-as-possible' ritual. Sam, Tim's aide, was always pretty near, legs swinging as she sat on the desk, looking around the room to see who was there (who had not bothered) and making a mental note of names no doubt...

When Tim started, it was interesting to listen to what he had done during the week. Although a couple of things always happened: one intrigued me, the other amused. The intrigue was caused by the positioning of topics Tim talked about. He invariably started his list of 'highlights across the organization' with a minor event or activity and put a more important one in the middle and subtly glossed over it. I knew it was deliberate because he referred to a written list that (written by Sam, I would imagine). But why not have the important event or activity topping the 'bill' or ending it? I could never understand.

The amusing thing was the performance. Tim had a list of 'leavers and starters' from the organization in his hand. The 'leavers' were dealt with relatively efficiently and quickly. The 'starters' went like this:

Tim said the name of the new starter. The new starter blushed (presumably not warned of the ritual by their colleagues). The individual was pushed forward by the 'mob' to stand in front of all those assembled. Tim made sure everyone was looking at the individual (it felt Dickensian), then asked what the person did for PADA (many floundered at this point, being new). Tim would then ask what organization they worked for before. The individual would say the company name and the 'mob' went "Ohhhh", egged on by 'Madame la Guillotine', Tim. Goldman Sachs tended to get the loudest and longest "oh", NatWest – or another bank – not quite so loud (but still impressive), consultancies too, down to organizations no-one had heard of, until you got to a public sector organization that tended to get a very low key, rather embarrassed, "oh" (more "ah!").

The individual, red faced, melted back into the crowd. The next individual was named and exactly the same happened. Week-in, week-out – the same.

After every 'sheep had been dipped' Tim moved on to the next topic: 'new-starter-humiliation-ritual' over for another week.

4.3.2 People, structure and governance

After PADA's establishment in July 2007, PADA recruited its first three members of staff: a chair, a non-executive director and its CEO. Additionally the organization created a 'sense of identity' by creating a brand for the organization, a black lozenge shaped logo with the personal accounts delivery authority written within it in white lettering¹⁶. It should be noted that prior to the enactment of the Pensions Act 2008 lower case lettering was always used by the organization, recognizing that the personal accounts pension scheme itself did not yet legally exist. A vision statement inevitably followed the logo: 'Helping millions save for their retirement'. This was automatically placed as the footer to everyone's email signature. The vision was underpinned by a set of principles to which the organization should be able to prove it was adhering in all activities. These focused on how the scheme should minimize the burden on employers, and ensure that the cost of the personal accounts scheme should be as low as possible for future members and that the organization did all it could to encourage people to save for their retirement. Once created, these principles were prepared for Parliament for inclusion in the Pensions Act 2008. It was also soon after the creation of PADA that people within the organization moved premises from a Government building near the Law Courts just off Holborn, London, to a building at the 'wrong' end of Borough High Street in south east London called St. Dunstan's House.

In the early days of the organization there was a gradual recruitment of people, mainly interim managers, and it seemed a long time before the number of PADA employees grew. In fact, in July 2007, at the beginning of PADA's existence, there were 40

people in total working in PADA: three were employees, 22 were consultants (i.e. individuals from professional consultancy firms), or interim managers (i.e. individuals who were self-employed as managers, or various types who hired themselves out to organizations on a short-term basis), with the remaining being secondees (i.e. civil servants seconded from Government departments), such as myself from the DWP. By April 2008 that number had grown to a total of 112: three employees, 30 interim/consultants and 79 secondees. Of this number eight were senior managers, 89 were middle managers, with the remaining 15 termed junior staff. Between this date and August 2009, when I ceased collecting the majority of my data, the number of people had risen to 199: 32 were now senior managers, 109 were middle managers and 58 were junior members of staff. The employment status of the people had also changed significantly as by August 2009 there were only 11 interim managers, 50 secondees and 138 employees. In the intervening period the organization had emphasized a preference for employing people, rather than retaining external people and secondees. This was in marked contrast to how other programmes across Whitehall tended to work.

While the numbers of people working in the programme changed significantly during this period, the way in which they were structured remained similar. The first organization chart was produced in August 2008 (see Appendix 4 for a facsimile), which was updated in May a year later (see Appendix 5 for a facsimile). Organizational charts showing each employee's role were not produced. The structure of the organization, from the most senior to the most junior, was as follows. Tim (the CEO) was the most senior, with a few people supporting him – in particular, an aide and a secretary. Tim then divided the organization into five directorates, two large and

three small in number. The two large directorates were headed by Simon and Helen. Simon, to whom I reported, led the delivery of the scheme including functions such as the programme management office, implementation, procurement (the team I led) and IT. The directorate headed by Helen, a senior seconded civil servant who had worked on the programme since the Pensions Commission, was policy and product development. The three smaller directorates were the investment directorate, which made decisions about the future investment choices of the members of the scheme, a finance directorate and lastly a team dealing with human resources. The largest two directorates accounted for approximately 75% of the staff. The largest single team for most of the period was mine, Commercial and Procurement, with 40 staff. The smallest was Facilities with 2 members of staff.

Tim reported to the PADA Board. This was chaired first by Paul Myners until his resignation in mid-2008¹⁷. Jeannie Drake, the Pensions Commissioner and non-executive director, replaced him. On the Board were the usual non-executive directors, all of whom were very senior industry leaders. In turn, the Board was answerable to Parliament and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

Vignette: The strange story of Simon's tax bill

It was a 'London' morning in the summer of 2008. I was pulled into Simon's office to talk through a recurring theme on his agenda – the level of external resources on my team. The conversation was always pretty similar: I needed to reduce the running costs of my team and therefore external resources had to go. My reply was always that I had genuinely found it difficult to achieve this as recruiting PADA employees had not been successful in the past. That said, of course, I was supportive as we were paying high daily rates for individuals and in some cases these were not adding the value they should have been. In fact, I said to Simon:

"I do support this in principle, Simon, you know. I am aware that many of my interims do not add huge value against what they are paid."

¹⁷ When he became the City Minister in the Labour Government.

He was nodding enthusiastically at this stage, thinking he was making headway with me. (Although I noted the irony to myself given that until fairly recently Simon had been an interim before he became a PADA employee himself.)

“What gets me the most is that many of these ‘interims’ off-shore their tax affairs which means they only pay 20% tax on their earnings.”

In hindsight I really wished I hadn’t said this. Simon was going red – dark red in fact. And I knew that this could only really mean one thing: Simon was going to blow his top. I was right, but for the wrong reason.

“Well, *Matt*, I can assure you that this was not the case with *me* when I was an interim. I hope you are not referring to *me*. I paid the taxman all that was due.”

I left his office as soon as I could and forgot about the conversation.

It was the following week that I needed to run by Simon’s office again and talk to him about something that we dealt with quickly. Just as I was about to leave, he beckoned me to remain. There was something he wanted to show me, he said, as he ruffled through his rucksack. Out came a piece of paper that he handed to me. On it was a photocopy of a cheque made payable to the Inland Revenue.

“I wanted to show you the tax bill I paid during my time as an interim. I have put down the calculations of the amount of tax payable by the side at the right rates.”

As I held the piece of paper, trying to make sense of the numbers and my situation, his arms were out-stretched, hands pointing to the piece of paper in the way politicians wave their papers in Parliament, or priests bless their flock. While all this was happening, I began to feel a mixture of discomfort and humour at my predicament. Of course, Simon was deadly serious. I recall thinking that laughing or making light of the situation would be the wrong thing to do.

“I’m sure that it’s right, Simon. There was no need to prove it to me.” (Only just now remembering the conversation of a week before).

So what did this all mean? I thought to myself, walking back up the stairs to the fourth floor. Was it Simon’s show of civil correctness? Was it his way of saying he was ‘worthy’ to work in the public sector? Or was it his way of being more powerful or ‘righteous’ over me – that it wasn’t just civil servants that could do the right thing but those from the private sector too? I’m not sure to this day. It made me feel uncomfortable. It made me feel I was in the wrong for mentioning it the week before.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided information about the demographic and social changes that led to the need for private pension reform in the UK and the solution the Government enshrined in legislation to enact the change it desired. The chapter also serves as a prelude to the following three chapters that analyse the identity-relevant narratives I

collected while working in PADA. I have purposely presented the information in a way that provides a seemingly factual account of events and their sequence, although given my epistemological and ontological commitments, I accept that the story I have written is my own narrative, a reflection of a point in time, and merely one of the many I could have written about the organization. As Richardson (1992) remarks, ‘no matter how we stage the text, we – the authors – are doing the staging. As we speak about the people we study, we also speak for them. As we inscribe their lives, we bestow meaning and promulgate values’ (p.131).

CHAPTER 5

AN ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS' IDENTITY NARRATIVES

Each society has its regime of truth ... that is, the types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true;... the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.

(Foucault 1980, p.131)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses identity-relevant statements articulated by participants I interviewed¹⁸. The data is organized using Brown's (2006) framework: through notions of reflexivity, voice, plurivocity, temporality and fictionality, I examine identity statements as 'sites of hegemonic struggle' (p.733) (see also Gramsci 1971). I used this model for two reasons: firstly, to explore identity narratives from different perspectives, rather than opting to discuss the organization's central, distinctive and enduring characteristics (Albert & Whetten 1985), and secondly, to evaluate it using empirical data. The chapter is divided into six sections: five cover each notion in the framework, which I follow by analysing the interplay between them. The analysis focuses on the conflicting and heterogeneous nature of participants' understandings of PADA's identities, to draw attention to 'identity ... as polyphony of texts' (Raggatt 2006, p.21) (see also Belova 2010; Boje 1995) and as a mechanism for 'domination and resistance, hegemony and control' (Brown 2006, p.732) (see also Castells 1997; Witten 1993). I conclude the chapter with closing remarks in which I offer a critique of the framework used to construct this analysis.

¹⁸ Participants' statements are referenced as follows: (PT11:9) where PT refers to the participant's initials; 11 refers to the interview number; and 9 refers to the page of the transcript.

5.2 Reflexivity

This section explores reflexive identity-relevant claims made by participants: through such statements, members of PADA putatively understood themselves as a collective. Taking Holland's (1999) definition of reflexive narratives as those that turn back upon or take account of the self, my exploration focuses on statements about PADA's character that refer to the interviewee's self: exposing the underlying assumptions and the 'biography of authors' (May 1999, p.5). The section is divided into two parts: whilst each focuses on reflexive statements, they do so through claims participants made about PADA as a public or private sector institution and the organization's relationship with the DWP.

5.2.1 PADA as a private or public sector organization

PADA's status as a non-departmental public body (NDPB) meant the organization was part of the public sector but conducted its business at 'arm's length' from government. The rationale for this was to create the perception externally that the organization was delivering the scheme as part of the pension industry reforming itself, rather than the Government imposing change. As I highlighted in the previous chapter, to strengthen this view, PADA adopted a policy of recruiting from the private sector in addition to those civil servants it seconded from the DWP. This eclectic mix of employees resulted in a clear sense of PADA's identity – as either a public or private sector organization – in some participants' identity claims, but conflict, even confusion, in those of others. The following is divided into two sections, detailing public and private sector participants' perspectives on whether PADA's characteristics were more those of a public or private sector organization.

Public sector perspectives

Civil servants, seconded to PADA from the DWP, tended to emphasize characteristics that suggested alignment with their understandings of the identities of other public sector institutions. A member of the investment team, for example, commented passionately about PADA belonging to the Government, denying others' aspirations for it solely to be a commercially-driven organization. He said:

“... I think PADA ... I think saying to people that we're an NDPB doesn't really mean anything to anybody. Yeah, I think people just assume we're Government and it's ... just in effect ... we are Government” (PT11:9).

A junior economist recalled that what he noticed most about PADA when it was created was the number of people who were not civil servants working in the organization, implying this felt unusual. He said:

“... the first thing that I suppose struck me was the number of people that are here ((laughingly)) that aren't civil servants ... which for me obviously that's a big difference ... and with that comes some sort of different behaviour types” (DB45:3).

However, he commented later in the interview: “I think it's still a public sector organization” (DB45:4). Other civil servants, like Claire, a senior member of the implementation team, also described PADA's characteristics from the perspective of her background, but expressed concern about how she perceived PADA's identity was developing. She said:

“... you know we as civil servants are very value driven and we're used to organizations that are value driven and people focused ... and I think PADA will be more business focused” (CL9:7).

Her comments are suggestive of characteristics she associated with working in the public sector and highlight her understanding of how these differed from her perceptions of the emerging statements made about PADA. Shortly after the interview

she resigned from the organization and returned to the DWP. In an email to some of her ‘public sector colleagues’, she wrote that the organization was one in which she could no longer work. She suggested PADA did not understand that it had been created to deliver a policy for the ‘common good’ by building a universally accessible pension scheme – a statement that further suggested she left because the organization was progressively ignoring organizational characteristics that she valued. While such views dominated most civil servants’ narratives, they were not universally held: a few civil servants, for example, emphasized PADA’s emerging private sector characteristics in their statements positively. Andy, for example, said:

“My first memories I guess were of an emerging organization ... it was interesting to experience myself, as a civil servant, something that has become now a very public sector (corrects himself), sorry a very private sector feel organization ... and how things changed into a sort of brand new organization with a new location, chief executive, structure ... a strategy and a plan for doing what it’s doing” (AN53:2).

Private sector perspectives

Participants with private sector backgrounds made less homogeneous comments about their understanding of PADA’s identities. This was possibly because they had been recruited from various organizations. Some, like John, a junior commercial manager and lawyer, stressed the need for the organization to feel distinct and independent from the rest of the public sector, given the advice it was obliged to offer the Government.

He commented:

“I think ... the ... important part of PADA is [for it] to be seen to be completely separate from Government and disassociating itself [from] Government ... our role at the moment as an advisory body needs to be completely focused on giving ... impartial advice” (JW5:3).

Others emphasized how the organization began to feel more like a private sector entity with the recruitment of people from this sector. The CEO's secretary said:

“... I think a lot of people have come from the private sector as opposed to sort of Government so that's definitely coming through and the fact that the CEO [is from the private sector] ... and you know that's very clear” (LG49:7).

Similarly, some suggested that: “... it's beginning to feel more private sector as we've gone through” (SW44:6) and related these thoughts to the overall performance of the organization as “interesting” (SW44:6), “target driven” (JC25:9) and “dynamic” (SW44:6). In contrast, others were confused by what to make of the organization. One private sector manager commented that:

“I don't think [PADA] feels like anything. It doesn't feel like anything I've worked in before ... Um, I..., you can't really, you can't really explain what PADA is ... it's like to work in PADA. It's very ... different from anything I've experienced” (LP3:5).

Others, while more certain of their understanding of the organization's identity, emphasized how different PADA was to other financial services organizations in the private sector. Angela, an HR manager (previously employed by an investment bank), said: “So, for me, it's very ... so if you had the public/private sector continuum it's very far down the public sector continuum” (AC35:14). The finance director spoke of PADA's distinctive characteristics as essentially public sector but highlighted conflict within this conceptualization. He commented on the role of PADA as follows:

“... obviously the delivery of the scheme ... to ... the ... Trustee Corporation within a political world and social policy confines as opposed to within a commercial world. [But] there's a conflict ... [with this] that the political master is one [that wants the scheme] to be implemented in the most commercial way possible” (JC42:1).

Some participants spoke about PADA's "mixed heritage" (SR23:8). For example, the business delivery director and former investment banker remarked:

"I think PADA's an experiment ... a lot of new things being tried out within PADA as a device to get something done ... PADA is a 'Cheshire cat' so it has to simply disappear and leave a warm glow ... I think, I think no one has a clear understanding of what PADA is and as it moves through the project and understands those things it has to do ... those things it's reconciling I think it forces everyone to change their mind on what it is" (SR23:15).

Similarly, a consultant from the technical team commented on the mix of private and public sector people within the organization, albeit less positively, highlighting a conflict between the 'public sector and private sector mentalities' within PADA that impacted on decision-making. He said: "I'll be perfectly frank, I think ... private sector people ... are ... used to kind of making ... decisions and just seeing them through" (LS27:10).

5.2.2 PADA's relationship with the DWP

The decision to write legislation to set up PADA had been taken by the DWP. Prior to this, work to deliver the scheme was undertaken by individuals in the department who were subsequently seconded to the PADA (including myself). Therefore, for some participants, the organization emerged, both legally and within people's minds, from the DWP. Many participants commented on the organization's relationship to the department in their identity claims. In particular, participants commented on the degree to which they believed PADA's identity felt separate and distinct from the department or whether they conflated the identities of the two organizations; narratives of these three conceptualizations of PADA are explored below.

PADA as separate from the DWP

The head of policy development in PADA, while discussing the first few months of the organization and as the first board members were being appointed, said:

“... so it was sort of strange, you know, I felt positive in the sense that [PADA has] ... got some leadership to look to and ... actually starting to create a sense of identity and separation from the department” (SC10:5).

Her role prior to secondment to PADA had been to craft the legislation that had created the organization, ensuring all the safeguards were in place to prevent it becoming too detached from the DWP. As an organization she had a role in creating, this was reflexive in the sense that it implies PADA was real and had a viable future and this, in turn, satisfied her own sense of worth:

“I think in terms of an organization we really need to create a sense of being a single organization with a single purpose because ... there is quite a lot of cliquishness in PADA at the moment” (SC10:5).

The reference to partisanship suggests that while she promoted an understanding of PADA characterized by a single, homogeneous identity (Albert & Whetten 1985), presumably to enable successful delivery of the scheme, this view was not shared by others. From a different perspective, a senior member of the investment team spoke about his desire for PADA to feel different from the DWP. He said:

“... as difficult as it’s been to give us separation from the DWP both physically ... and in people’s minds I think [it] was very important because I think a lot of people were still in, um, the kind of DWP kind of mentality. I think I have much more accountability [in PADA], um so I am personally accountable for an awful lot ... [and] I think there isn’t the threat of consequence in the department that there is here” (SK4:11).

However, his suggestion that PADA was separate from the DWP, given its characteristics, was possibly for different reasons: for him, the desire for separation related to the power he believed this gave him in the organization. Throughout his

interview, PADA was presented as an organization of achievement, one that “constantly challenges what we do”, and is “open and listens to everyone’s ideas” (SK4:19)¹⁹. Similarly, Will, a member of the communications team, made reference to a facet of working in PADA in comparison to the DWP, arguing:

“I think in most parts, not probably my part [though], but in most parts of the organization [PADA] it does have a genuinely kind of non-hierarchical view of how things should be done” (WS47:11).

I asked Sam, the head of the funding team, to characterize PADA as a board game. He said he thought the organization was similar to Mouse Trap, citing PADA as the mouse, being moved by others around the board with the trap being applied by the DWP. As he commented, the DWP are: “[reluctant] to let go of the thing that they’ve created, I think” (SB20:4). This comment can be interpreted in various ways: either as a reference to the similarities between the DWP’s and PADA’s characteristics, given that they played different roles but in the same game, or a reference to PADA as a distinct organization but one the identity of which the DWP still controlled. Both views, however, suggest that PADA’s future and how Sam thought its identity might emerge was not solely within its own hands, but within the DWP’s.

Rebecca, a junior member of the funding team, told a story about when she had made a visit to the department where a senior member of the DWP was giving a ‘stand-up presentation’ about the reform programme and had made derogatory comments about PADA. She said:

“I was a bit upset ... really, because I didn’t think it was a very fair comment and because we all were working so hard over here to kind of establish ourselves ... because at that point we were trying to

¹⁹ Ironically, some months after the interview he returned to the department, having been asked, I understand, to reconsider his position in PADA.

establish ourselves as diff... as separate from DWP, because we'd only just moved out of, um, the Adelphi²⁰ and so it just felt quite different to try and ... we was [sic] trying to distance ourselves but keep good relations and it felt like they was [sic] making it quite difficult" (RS8:6).

These comments signal this participant's desire for PADA's identity to feel different and distinct from the DWP. This was similar for many seconded from the DWP who needed to believe their career would benefit from the move: claims of PADA's distinctiveness were about reinforcing their perception that they were indeed seconded from the DWP.

PADA as part of the DWP

The desire for PADA's identity to be distinct from the DWP was not articulated by everyone. Some participants commented on how similar PADA's characteristics were to those of the DWP; for example, a senior member of the requirements team said:

"... I have to confess I don't find it that different, so part of that is because of familiarity with a number of people who have also come from the Department. I think individuals talk about culture, cultures, you know, not defined by any one person, it's a kind of group of people, but the culture comes from the top. PADA's [a] developing organization that perhaps behaves differently in some respects from the Department. But when we talk about the Department, my experience is that within the Department there are many sub-cultures and I would really see PADA as a kind of sub-culture within that so I don't feel a particular disconnect" (IP17:6).

5.3 Voice

This section explores identity-relevant statements articulated by four 'voices' in the organization: I highlight the positions taken by each and analyse what these suggest about participants' understandings of PADA's identities. The section is divided into

²⁰ A government building occupied by some members of the programme.

two parts: the first explores public and private sector voices, and the second critical and supportive voices. In both, I focus, in particular, on what participants said about leaders and leadership in PADA given that this theme was invariably discussed in interviews and linked closely to organizational identity statements²¹.

5.3.1 Public and private sector voices about PADA's leaders

Public sector voice

A single theme dominated statements made by participants with public sector backgrounds on leadership in PADA: that the recruitment of private sector leaders was as if the 'cavalry had arrived' and how different this style of leadership felt for them. By highlighting these statements, I seek to identify positions adopted by this group and offer an interpretation of how leadership statements were identity-relevant.

There were many comments made by members of this group regarding the effect the recruitment of private sector leaders had on PADA. Statements tended to emphasize the importance participants placed on the leaders' private sector background and the different style of management they engendered. As a senior member of the policy team said:

"I think it was great to have that focus of having a chief exec, it felt like a huge achievement; we've actually got somebody here now who's not a civil servant and ... who can ... sort of lead us as an organization" (SC10:4).

Another said:

"... to have ... someone who was there every day, who was ((corrects herself)) ... wasn't a civil servant but ... was actually there to run it; I think that was quite a big ... change" (RS8:6).

²¹ See Gabriel (2000, pp.204–214) who highlights the prominence of leadership stories in organizations: 'fantasizing about leaders is common in organizations' (p.204).

This was echoed by a member of the commercial team who commented that:

“I felt an immediate change [in the organization] when Tim and Simon were recruited ... I think the key event in PADA’s life was the recruitment of [these] ... senior officers ... and the ... professionalism that was brought in ...” (AN53:5).

These comments suggest participants considered it important for leadership in PADA to feel different from what they had experienced as civil servants. This was promoted in view of this cohort’s aspiration to make PADA’s identity feel distinctive from what they were used to. While this might seem counter-intuitive, there was a strong sense that new leadership was welcome and few expressed concerns about it. Indeed, the comments seem purposefully to position their authors as subservient to the private sector leadership as these “sort of expert private sector leaders” (SC10:4) were perceived to provide credibility and professionalism, putatively absent in the organization prior to their recruitment.

Participants also expressed the view that the leaders recruited from the private sector were like the ‘cavalry had come to rescue’ the project. One, while recalling the “messy and disorganized” (ZR6:3) nature of the work prior to the appointments and the “little embryonic teams around the place” (ZR6:3) said:

“one of [the] earliest memories is then Tim ... the chief exec being appointed and... and bringing Simon ... to run the programme management and that having quite a transformative effect ... because it started to feel like a sort of top-down organization” (ZR6:4).

Others commented on how private sector leaders had greater expectations of civil servants and would demand “[us to be] more focused and professional ... [more] ... organized and on top of our game.” (SC10:4). These statements suggested participants

considered the role leaders played was to ‘turn the project around’ from that which had been previously managed by their fellow civil servants. However, the implied subservience in these comments, from civil servants to their private sector leaders, was not accompanied by resentment; rather the participants drew comfort from this. For this cohort, PADA needed private sector leaders to make the organization feel distinctive from the Government: I suggest members of this group used ‘leadership’ statements in order to characterize their understandings of PADA’s distinguishing features. These comments may also have been a ploy to re-position responsibility for the successful delivery of the project away from civil servants to the private sector recruits: statements were positioned purposefully to shift liability away from these participants and with it, their power.

Private sector voice

Private sector participants made seemingly positive statements about leaders with similar backgrounds to their own. Central to these claims was the extent to which participants believed in the capability of leaders, the authority they brought and how PADA changed after their recruitment: such statements, I argue, impacted on this group’s understandings of PADA’s identities. Statements from this group were suggestive of overwhelming approval of these leaders, given the familiarity of their management style and a belief that it was right for the organization to be led by people with private sector backgrounds.

Participants described the impact that Tim and Simon had on the organization when they were first recruited. One of the directors remarked that, had private sector leaders not been recruited, it would not have “got off the ground, basically” (MF34:4). He said:

“But I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t think well we could deliver but it’s because of people like Tim and Simon ... in particular but I think it can be delivered. I think what I’ve seen of DWP it wouldn’t stand a chance” (MF34:4).

Others highlighted the capability that private sector leaders brought to the organization. One of the planners remarked:

“... I think that the senior management team leadership which is quite... ((pauses for thought)) I wouldn’t say unusual but it, it’s refreshing... But to actually lead, to actually show people what they can be and so ... Tim ... is obviously key in that ... and I think so the way it’s done, I think that there is a community growing here because of the senior management team’s approach. Tim ... is very highly motivational ... he basically stands up there and says, “Look, I’m the boss and I’m leading this...” [and] he makes you feel that there’s solidarity and that there’s protection from above and we’re all trying to do this together” (SW44:4–5).

Other comments emphasized how the private sector leaders had resulted in greater control in the organization. A member of the requirements team said:

“[While] I think there’s still ... maybe two divisions ... it doesn’t seem as overtly sort of line-in-the-sand as perhaps it was six months ago [as] ... I think that there’s ... a bit ... more commercial awareness maybe from the people in the policy camp” (GPB29:3).

These views suggest that the recruitment of private sector leaders altered the public sector culture that they believed was endemic in the organization. It is possible that such comments were motivated by participants feeling more comfortable with this style of management within the organization. Indeed, as another participant remarked:

“Tim is a very inspiring speak[er]. He’s got so much energy and enthusiasm and it’s so open that, um, I think it’s great” (MF34:12).

And one of the secretaries said:

“I’ve never worked with someone like Tim who’s so open with ... his employees, interim secondees. He’s just completely open ... I find in terms of what he’s thinking. He’s happy to just, you know open door policy, the fact that anyone can come and chat to him whenever about anything ... and the management team so it’s a really open approach to ... working with people which I find quite ... inspiring” (KO18:9).

A senior marketing manager implied that the organization changed when Tim was recruited and commented about an organization ‘pre-Tim’ and one quite different ‘during Tim’. She also said:

“... so everything was... came with those assumptions embedded (talking of the civil service way of leadership) ‘til Tim came on board” (NC1:11).

Such statements suggest leaders brought skills and experience to the organization that meant it could be managed effectively. This legitimized their positions, influence and power within the organization; it strengthened their voice in an organization that had previously been influenced by Government. Their statements also imply how the change in leadership altered private sector employees’ perspectives on PADA’s identities, away from an organization with public sector central characteristics to one they associated with private sector characteristics.

5.3.2 Critical and supportive voices about PADA'S leadership

Critical voices

Not all comments made about PADA's leaders were positive; indeed, many participants made critical comments about this aspect of PADA's identity. Two themes were particularly evident: the power leaders had and the level of trust participants had in leaders.

A senior marketing manager spoke about her perception of PADA's dysfunctional culture given the power leaders exerted in the organization. She said:

“Some people struggle with how to ... [deliver under pressure] and ... it feels to me like the culture here [in PADA] is one of threat. You know, ‘you have to do this because Tim requires it’, ‘the plan requires it’, ‘Helen requires it’. You know people use senior names all of the time” (LM2:18).

These comments suggest a hierarchical organization, in which fear of non-delivery of the ‘right work’ to the ‘right person’ was used as a mechanism of control. These are critical sentiments given that some participants promoted the view of PADA's characteristics as a non-hierarchical organization in which everyone had access to leaders in the organization and all members' voices were heard: ‘the leader ... imagined as someone who is accessible ... seen ... and heard’ (Gabriel 2000, p.212).

A member of the investment team, for example, alluded to the type of power leaders had within the organization. He said:

“... my first meeting with Simon was within a meeting with ... some contractor at that US event ... and I thought he was quite ((hesitates)) aggressive is probably the wrong word, but combative, I think. My first impression ... he reminds me of Alastair Campbell – I mean I've never met Alastair Campbell – but gives that impression as a sort of Tim's the kind of ... the sort of friendly face of things, and Simon get sent to make sure these things get done.

So, yeah, it did seem a kind of a Blair/Campbell kind of relationship I thought” (PT11: 4/5).

One of the secretaries in the organization talked about how bitter she felt about the number of consultants that leaders in PADA had recruited. When asked about what she believed was distinctive about the organization, she said:

“All the contractors and consultants ((laughingly)). We’re supposed to be, you know, there’s job cuts going on ... within the civil service and yet they’re taking on more and more contractors.”

Interviewer: “How did that make you feel?”

“Pissed off. My husband lost his job, he was a civil servant ... so he, he got ... early severance pay and you know when you think about these other people who... he was only an AO at the time and there’s people, you know who are getting paid what he got paid in a month, getting paid in a day. I blame ... well you know” (CK13:2).

These were critical comments as an embedded assumption in PADA was that the number of civil servants was planned to be reduced and that for private sector employees and contractors to be increased. While others did not articulate such comments, they highlight how some in the organization felt disengaged with the principles promoted by the organization’s leaders. Other participants, such as a senior member of the communications team echoed these thoughts. She said:

“((deep sigh)) I would say eight times out of ten the power is exercised by the most senior person. So if Tim’s in the room it’s Tim ... if Tim’s not on the room and Simon’s in the room, it’s Simon, if Tim and Simon aren’t in the room then it’s Helen” (NC1: 25).

Another participant and senior member of the requirements team said:

“... for me that’s probably one of the weakest areas of PADA ... is the decision-making process. I think there’s too much committee-style decision-making when ultimately it probably isn’t made by committee if that makes sense. So we go through all the ... palaver of ... committee-style decisions but ultimately...”

Interviewer: “...and then Helen and Simon say, ‘no’.”

“... or Tim” (GPB29:33).

These comments suggest central characteristics of PADA as a bureaucratic organization: again not words that leaders sought to promote about PADA's identity. One of the consultants in the organization retold a story when another senior manager, Helen, held an away day event for her team and they discussed whether to do one thing or another and had a vote on the matter. He described how he specifically noticed that when it became clear Helen had decided upon one option, so others followed, even though he believed they thought it was the wrong direction. What makes this remarkable was the importance of this option: whether to make the scheme an e-business pension scheme or one run through traditional methods of delivery. As he said:

“... there [was] a reluctance to actually vote against the ... what's the phrase – the party, party whip” (ML24:7).

Supportive voices

There was a distinctive voice that articulated overwhelmingly positive comments about leaders in the organization. I asked one of the directors in the organization what he thought was the most important event in PADA's life. He said:

“((pause)) Well so I think the most important event in PADA's life predate me. I think the most important event ... was the appointment of its CEO, which I think is ... the most important position in PADA. ... I think ... it was [an] important thing symbolically. ... I think it was absolutely important because through that individual, um, you know, the identity ... of the organization ... the organization draws its identity” (SR23:3).

This comment is intriguing as it suggested how PADA's identity was one capable of being centrally determined by a single individual, the CEO (Rhodes 2001). It implies that this was a normal course of identity development for this participant and one accepted without question. Another participant, and a member of the HR team,

suggested something similar when she recounted a memory of her first day at PADA.

She said:

“Emma²² came down and met me at reception and welcomed me ... and then my first memory was Tim ... coming in ... as the first speak[er] at [my] induction and talking all about personal accounts ... and I remember thinking my goodness everybody here’s so clever ... and they all know so much and this sounds so complicated ... am I in the right place” (AC35:3).

Others commented extensively on the chair of the organization, an individual with a part-time role for PADA and whom we saw only very rarely in London. One of the senior policy advisors spoke at great length about this individual, commenting:

“I think it’s his reputation and ability. It’s a mixture of understanding investment, but actually knowing his way round the public sector, ... so having confidence both of the Government and also um, the industry ... and the financial services side of the industry ... I think Paul was both a sort of motivational, inspirational person but also a restraining influence as well” (SC10:9).

Another spoke about this leader, too, and her view that organizational ethos and priorities were all drawn from this person. She said:

“I think a lot of that [ethos in the organization] was founded on Paul ... and kind of what he envisioned for the pension scheme” (RS8:1).

Others emphasized the positive characteristics that the leaders brought to the organization. One participant spoke about the ‘stand-up’ session the CEO gave, which others mocked as incidental. He said:

“So I think the stand-ups ... started off ... well firstly they’re kind of like textbook ... good, leadership. So you know ... credit to Tim ... I think they were [a] very good idea.” (JR16:3).

²² Emma was the HR Director at PADA.

A member of the commercial team echoed this point further, saying:

“Those people (Tim and Simon) bring with them, not only experience but ego and a sense of ‘I’ve done it before this way, therefore this is the way I’m going to do it this time’” (AN53:8).

While, on the one hand, the supportive comments clearly suggest the admiration some participants in PADA had for the organization’s leaders, on the other hand, they are also suggestive of a perception by this cohort that the organization was controlled by a small number of influential people. The power exerted through this control seemed not to threaten participants, but rather was perceived as a source of comfort: the level of control was welcomed and felt a normal part of working in PADA.

5.4 Plurivocity

This section focuses on participants’ interpretations of PADA’s central, distinctive and enduring characteristics. Each of the three sub-sections describes an interpretation of the organization’s identity: firstly, PADA characterized as a project; secondly, as an organization in transition (from the DWP to the Trustee Corporation); and finally, PADA as an organization in steady state. I refer to Soenen and Moingeon’s (2002) five-facet framework of collective organizational identities and analyse what mix of ‘professed’, ‘projected’, ‘experienced’, ‘manifested’ and ‘attributed’ identity is suggested by each interpretation. Finally, as a central theme of this chapter is the difference between identity statements from participants with public and private sector backgrounds, I highlight in each interpretation, where evident, differences between these cohorts.

5.4.1 PADA as a project

Albeit far from universal, a common interpretation of PADA's identity was that its central, distinctive and enduring characteristics were of an organization managing a project. Projects are defined as temporary endeavours with a planned beginning and end, undertaken to meet unique goals and objectives (Noakes 2007). The majority of participants articulated characteristics that either referred specifically to, or were suggestive of, PADA's identity in these terms. In this interpretation, participants emphasized the view that work to deliver the pension scheme had only commenced when the organization had been created in 2007, that central to PADA's existence was delivering a single financial product and that PADA was a time-limited organization that would be wound up by an Act of Parliament at a pre-determined date. By describing PADA with these characteristics, some participants highlighted how senior people managed the organization with its project status in mind and consequently cited how careers were limited in PADA. Given that most participants made statements that interpreted PADA's identity in this way, it could be argued that this represents the 'professed' and prominently 'experienced' interpretation of PADA's identity (Soenen & Moingeon 2002).

Participants emphasized PADA's project characteristics by suggesting that the work to set up the scheme only commenced when PADA had been set up. For example, Nick, the head of project management, said:

“So, initially there wasn't really anyone in PADA, that didn't really exist, so it's not ... a pre-existing organization being given a job to do ... it had to set itself up and staff itself and build its team, build its plans to deliver that ... actually all of that in a context that it won't itself last for all that long anyway” (NS46:1).

This comment is interesting, as it conflates the start of the effort to set up the pension scheme with the creation of PADA; in doing so, it denies the work that had been undertaken in the DWP by civil servants. This was possibly an attempt to position PADA as the organization critical to delivery of the scheme and marginalize the DWP's role in this activity; in consequence, the comment suggests how this participant believed PADA's importance was greater than that of the DWP in the task to deliver the scheme.

Some participants interpreted PADA's identity as a project as its role was delivery of a single financial services product. For example, the finance director said of PADA:

“... it's an implementation of a long term project and you never find that solely existing in an organization [in the private sector] ... this organization is built to be one long-term project ... so, in that sense it's different from all other [organizations]” (JC42:5).

This was echoed by one of PADA's consultants who said:

“... it's quite interesting because if you contrast ... [private sector organizations] with what PADA is here for [its very different] and there's a clue in [PADA's] name in terms of 'delivery [authority]” (RS31:9).

This was reinforced by another participant who remarked “... PADA is responsible for setting up a trustee and I think PADA is responsible for setting up a scheme” (RS31:9). While these three comments were made by those with private sector backgrounds, the interpretation of PADA as a one-product and time-limited organization was also held by some public sector participants. As Sam, the head of funding, for example, said:

“So the ... sense [is] that you're temporary [because] you're focused on ... delivering [this] kind of ... product” (SB19:9).

Others, in their interpretation of PADA's identity, focused on its defined end date. PADA's distinctive characteristic was that it would not endure; as one participant said:

"Um so ((pauses for thought)) it clearly has a reasonably well defined role in terms of setting up a pension scheme ... with the sort of overlaid point that it will never actually run the pension scheme" (NS46:1).

Another remarked when asked about PADA's future:

"I think it kind of helps keep people's minds on, you know, PADA isn't here to justify its existence or ... be this corporate entity that's going to kind of sit around for ages and you know..." (WS47:5).

Others defined PADA's wind-down in different terms by remarking specifically on the temporary nature of its work. For instance, Jack, a junior analyst, when referring to PADA's central characteristics, said: "I think it reflects the spontaneous ... nature of the programme ... so it does reflect the transience, I think" (JR16:15). Some participants who interpreted PADA as a project also commented on how senior people managed the organization with its project status in mind and this, in turn, reinforced the perception of PADA as a project. Some, like Sharon, a senior manager whose job was to liaise with the DWP, said:

"Well it puts me in a completely difficult position, because in a way ... my job really has become with the Stewardship team (her liaison point in the DWP) ... is to act as almost like a shock absorber between the ... management here, who really want to focus on the project, understandably, and don't want to deal with all this sort of messy, boring, time-wasting [steady state organizational matters]" (SC10:15).

5.4.2 PADA as an organization in 'transition'

Another 'professed' and 'experienced' interpretation of PADA's identity, albeit by fewer participants, was that the organization could be characterized as being in

transition: from what it was perceived to be ‘now’ to one distancing itself from the DWP and becoming the Trustee Corporation. The interpretation of PADA’s identity characterized as being in transition was articulated at all levels in the organization but almost exclusively by those with private sector backgrounds. This was possibly because an interpretation of PADA that emphasized central and distinctive characteristics as in transition to the Trustee Corporation implied distancing the organization from the DWP. This may have been deployed as a mechanism to leverage power to private sector participants who said they were keen to break from the DWP: by lessening this link it strengthened claims for PADA’s independence from the department. As Simon, one of the senior directors, remarked:

“... I think ... no one has a clear understanding of what PADA is and as it moves through the project and understands those things it has to do ... and those things it’s reconciling. I think it forces everyone to change their mind on what it is. So ... I think only when you have the debate about what the Trustee Corporation is and when it must be ... can you understand what PADA is and what it ... must do and by when it must do it ... so I think PADA ... is not just a place where change is happening, and not just a place which is driving change, PADA is something which is inherently ... you know, it’s sort of metamorphosing ... from one things to another” (SR23:15).

Another senior manager articulated a similar view and, when asked if PADA were a type of journey, what it would be, said a “bus ride to Brixton” (JR42:14). Explaining, he said:

“... you know where the destination is which is helpful (the Trustee Corporation), [which] in most businesses you don’t. So we know what’s at the end and at this point in time we’re still not absolutely certain that we’re going to like it” (JC42:14).

Other participants more overtly focused on PADA as an entity evolving and emphasized it as being in transition. A senior member of the requirements team equated PADA with a teenager. He said: “I think ... we’re probably ... more than 14

[years old], I think we're probably sort of a bit more mature than that, but maybe not quite left home yet" (GPB29:11). Others made comments suggestive of change, such as a junior member of the finance team, who said:

"I think DWP set PADA up not quite thinking enough what it wanted of PADA and because PADA's got kind of an evolving role, so it's going from its advising role to its kind of executive phase where it's actually delivering something, because it knew that it was going to have an executive phase it came in, you know immediately and was fighting for the interests of the scheme viability and kind of deliverability" (ZR6:2).

These comments, which emphasize PADA's changing role, construct the organization as in transition. Some are suggestive of the transition away from the DWP; others emphasize the development of PADA towards the Trustee Corporation.

Other identity statements, however, centred on routines in PADA that were perceived to change continuously. These were suggestive, too, of a perception that the organization was transitioning from one entity to another. For example, a member of the communications team spoke of her routine in PADA as:

"... changing very radically ... I mean daily you weren't quite sure. Are we heading this way? Are we heading in that way? ... you know, all those things were shifting so frequently that trying to stay on top of where we are now and therefore to, to have a sensible anchor was really hard" (NC1:13).

5.4.3 PADA as a 'steady state' organization

While the two interpretations outlined above were conceptualizations of PADA's identity that was 'professed' and 'experienced', the following interpretation was one 'projected' by the organization and that 'manifested' itself within the organization's various routines (Soenen & Moingeon 2002). This interpretation was suggestive of PADA as a 'steady state' organization or as an entity 'here to stay'. This

interpretation was not articulated overtly by participants (i.e. professed) but was mentioned by some during interviews, particularly in the context of PADA having already achieved its goals and objectives. Statements also tended to deny the DWP's role in PADA and the creation of the Trustee Corporation. I outline below some of the written material PADA corporately produced which 'projected' its identity as a steady state organization; I follow these with some statements made by participants that were also suggestive of this interpretation of PADA's identity.

PADA projected an identity of an organization in steady state by producing artifacts associated with an organization that was perceived as one 'here to stay'. It produced its own website, intranet site, undertook various public consultations (for examples, see PADA 2008a) and made press releases, as would be expected of a steady state and mature organization. The annual accounts provide interesting statements that support this interpretation of a 'projected' steady state identity. For instance, in the foreword, the acting chair of the organization remarked: 'I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have worked so hard to bring the Authority to where it is now: in a strong position to move forward and establish the personal accounts scheme' (PADA 2008b, p.5). This statement is significant as it directly associated the creation of the scheme with PADA, denying that its final delivery would be the responsibility of the Trustee Corporation. The report goes on to describe how the organization's capabilities had been developed and, under a section devoted specifically to this, mentions:

'Much of our activity during the period covered by this report has been devoted to building our organizational capabilities: we have appointed Board members ... appointed staff; started to build our management and control systems and processes ... developed relations with other public bodies and stakeholders; ... begun to

develop a long-term strategy and short-term objectives.’ (PADA 2008a, p.18)

These are statements suggestive not of an identity with short-term ambitions but long-term goals: they were statements written corporately by the organization to promote PADA as an independent and autonomous organization, denying a trustee corporation that would follow and that the organization had been created by the DWP.

While participants did not make specific or direct reference to this facet of PADA’s identity, some statements suggested that PADA had already delivered its goals and that this meant it had achieved the status of a mature organization that had achieved a steady state. For instance, one participant, while describing important events in PADA’s life, described the most notable event as when the “organization ... stood on its own two feet, [one] that could get on with its own programme of work” (NC1:5). Others commented on how PADA had set up functions associated with an organization which was going to last in the future. One participant commented on the “professional pride” (NS46:4) the organization had in putting “stable, robust, high quality HR processes in place” (NS46:4) as employees would expect. Another suggested that PADA’s identity now would be similar to that of the Trustee Corporation in the future (SB19:4).

5.5 Temporality

Albert and Whetten’s (1985) criteria for describing an organization’s identity placed importance on organizational characteristics that endure or suggest temporal continuity that they defined as ‘some degree of sameness or continuity over time’

(p.264). This resonates with Ricoeur's (1991) thesis of a narrated identity, in the sense that 'identity-as-permanence' is 'what we have in mind when we affirm the identity of a thing' (p.75). In this section, I take an element of Ricoeur's (1991) conceptual framework, continuity versus discontinuity, to explore identity statements authored about PADA over the period during which interviews were conducted. The section is divided into two parts. The first explores identity statements about PADA that remained the same over time: this is in a single section, since such claims were similar between participants with private and public sector backgrounds. The second sub-section highlights identity statements discontinued over time: identity claims made strongly in early interviews but not in later sessions or that were replaced by statements offering opposing views. As there was contrast in discontinued identity statements between participants with public and private sector backgrounds, this sub-section is divided further with each section covering one cohort.

5.5.1 Continuity in identity statements

There was a single theme that remained consistent over the time that interviews were conducted: that the organization's role was to deliver the personal accounts pension scheme. Identity statements highlighting this theme were evident in each interview, regardless of the participants' background. This may have been because legislation, job descriptions and corporate documents all stressed this role and that over the period in which the interviews were conducted no further duties were formally given to PADA by the Government.

In an early interview one marketing manager described PADA's key role thus:

“... to establish a scheme, currently called the personal accounts scheme, that will mop up and provide a facility for ... all those

people who do not currently have adequate or even any pension provision through their workplace ... in order that the employers can meet their new duties under the new pension provision” (NC1:1).

A member of the investment team remarked on the same issue:

“I think [PADA’s key role is to] deliver a robust pension scheme for seven odd million people who don’t know the first thing about saving and who are probably quite risk averse and need to be presented [to] in a very, very friendly fashion” (PC15:2).

Both statements seem to suggest PADA’s central role in the delivery of the scheme and are suggestive of the social reasons why they thought this was needed and by whom.

During the middle period of interviewing, such claims about the organization’s role and central characteristics continued. For example, one of the commercial team remarked:

“... for me I think the ... clue is in the title – Personal Accounts Delivery Authority – so the only thing that PADA needs to do to be successful, its key success criteria is to deliver the personal accounts scheme and the trustee corporation” (AB19:1).

And another during the same period said:

“PADA’s key role is to do those things which are within its remit to produce a pension scheme which is viable for its target market” (SR23:1).

When this participant was asked whether he thought the rest of the organization would agree with his statement, he said: “I think they might articulate it slightly differently ... they might nuance it differently but I think they would agree with it” (SR23:1).

While there are indeed minor variations in language, the identity statements are remarkably similar in describing the essence of what PADA was created to do. This continued in later interviews in which one participant remarked:

“So its key role is to deliver a low cost...simple to use pension scheme...success at the end of PADA will be that they’ve delivered this pension scheme” (AC35:1).

These statements suggest that participants perceived PADA’s role as solely to ‘set up a national pension scheme’ (SC10:19); indeed, across all interviews this was the only theme universally articulated by participants and that persisted over time. Given that delivery of the scheme was enshrined in the title of the organization – the Personal Accounts Delivery Authority – this is unsurprising; however, it was interesting for two reasons. Firstly, this theme was unique as the only claim consistently cited by participants about their understanding of the organization’s central characteristics. Secondly, these statements were never accompanied by other organizational objectives often discussed within the organization: in articulating PADA’s role to ‘*deliver* the scheme’, participants were silent on other putative organizational functions. For example, it was common in the Government’s rhetoric to cite the policy as a way to stimulate the existing pensions industry: if the private pensions industry developed a scheme to compete with personal accounts, the Government would consider PADA a success. Further, while some of the identity statements focused on the number of people saving in the pensions scheme (always in the ‘millions’), from the Government’s point of view, if PADA could create a scheme viable for less than a million this too would be seen as a success story. In other words, while participants consistently articulated that PADA’s role was to ‘*deliver* the scheme to *millions* of people’, this theme did not mention other Government

objectives often talked about in the organization. This suggests participants employed a narrow perception of PADA as a ‘delivery of the scheme only’ as a mechanism of power: by being silent on other roles, it increased participants’ sense of importance – delivering the scheme was more important than being a catalyst for the pensions industry to deliver a better scheme. Indeed, the continuity of this theme over time became a way for participants to seek to control the organization’s identity for their own purposes, including their projection of the role to external stakeholders.

5.5.2 Discontinued identity statements

Private sector

This section outlines identity statements that were discontinued over time by participants with private sector backgrounds and identifies two prevalent themes. First, in early interviews identity statements characterized PADA as an organization in chaos; these statements were discontinued and replaced in later interviews by claims about the organization’s stability. Second, identity statements that characterized PADA as a public sector organization were later replaced by claims suggestive of a metamorphosis to a private sector entity. I discuss each of these in turn.

The first theme, evident in early interviews with private sector participants, was their perception of PADA as being in chaos; over time, this was replaced by putatively more positive perceptions about the organization’s central characteristics. In an early interview one participant remarked, when referring to a period of time just prior to the interview:

“... but [PADA] was changing very radically at that point, I mean daily you weren’t quite sure. Are we heading in this way? Are we

heading in that way? ... I mean everything changed all the time, and also the people around you changed too. So, so there was never any sense of constancy, consistency or clarity” (NC1:7/8).

Another referred to PADA’s apparent chaos, saying:

“... my personal view is that the ... it’s the existence of Government that makes the pension scheme build slowly, because there is so much stakeholder involvement and so little comprehension about the investment of the scheme ... if somebody had handed it to the private sector I think it would get built very quickly” (PC15:6).

Over time, and throughout the middle period of interviewing, these types of claims tended to be replaced by those that emphasized PADA in a state of ‘up and down’ – that chaos had been replaced by an organization progressing well and at other times forced back. One participant during this period, when asked what sort of board game PADA would be, remarked:

“Snakes and Ladders for me ... you’re ... trying to make a step forwards [and] every so often you hit an opportunity that might accelerate it slightly to, um, to wander up the... the ladder [and then there are] ... quite a few snakes that can just take you right back down to the beginning again” (AB19:5).

Others referred to this change in the organization in terms of activities that were being undertaken. One participant, when asked what characterized PADA, said: “... the endless need to plan and do more planning and accept the world’s changing around you and do more planning” (SR23:8).

During later interviews, participants more overtly articulated PADA’s characteristics by emphasizing the growing stability of the organization. For example, one participant remarked:

“I’d split it into two... two periods I think. The first period was kind of a ... walk in the mud as ... we all tried to work out where we were going a bit more. You know ... getting our plans right

[but] I guess the last six months has been ... a jog, moving steadily to a sprint" (SL27:20–21).

Indeed, in later private sector interviews participants did not refer to an organization in chaos. Such assertions were replaced by claims of PADA's success and its evolution to an organization that was fit to deliver. As the Investment Director said: "... I wouldn't be here if I didn't think ... we could deliver" (MF34:4).

The statements outlined above highlight how some identity statements were discontinued and replaced by positive claims from this cohort. Possibly this was the case because this group sought to shape PADA in the way they valued most: their presentation of chaos initially was suggestive of a reaction against the civil service approach to the programme's management. Moreover, by making chaos a characteristic of the organization in the past, this cohort sought to strengthen claims of their ability to delivery and organize the work more effectively. This ultimately served to reinforce their pursuit of control within the organization.

A further theme discontinued over time by this cohort was that PADA was an organization that felt like a public sector entity; this was replaced by a perception of one more private sector in nature. In early interviews it was common that private sector participants suggested that PADA felt like a public sector organization. One said:

"Now I know PADA is not inside the civil service, but I would say for the first six months, at least of my time here, it may as well of [sic] been because that's exactly what it feels like" (NC1:11).

In later interviews, this characteristic, so prominent in the early interviews, was replaced by statements that emphasized private sector characteristics. For example, Gavin, a member of the requirements team, remarked:

“I think one of the most interesting things that has happened since I’ve been here, I think, is the shift from a very policy-driven programme to a more commercially savvy, you know, commercial type ... programme” (GBP29:2).

Another commented:

“... and basically being available to any employee ... employer who... who wants to use personal accounts in fulfilling its employer duties. So I think success isn’t really ... it isn’t about how many members we have, because success of the pension reform is the critical thing and if private providers step up to the plate and deliver a product then we could have one million members and still be successful because we’re part of a successful programme” (MF34:1).

As with ‘chaos to calm’ statements, this theme too was one argued to strengthen this group’s desire for overall control of the organization; by emphasizing change over time, from one type of organization to another, this group sought to silence both the influence and role of the DWP and that of civil servants in the organization.

Public sector

This section explores identity statements that were discontinued or replaced over time by public sector participants. Generally, there were fewer themes that were discontinued: there was a greater sense of continuity about what was perceived as central, enduring and distinctive about PADA by this cohort. This was possibly because, for civil servants, PADA was an organization running a project or in transition towards the Trustee Corporation; in other words, it was not important for this cohort that PADA developed or evolved its identity from how they conceived it initially. However, there was one theme evident in the early interviews but less so in

later sessions, namely that a central characteristic of the organization was that there was a ruling elite that held sway at the centre of PADA. Over time, this claim was replaced by a view of greater harmonization and a lessening or even acceptance of this dynamic of power.

This claim was articulated in a number of different ways; for example, in one early interview a member of the investment team remarked:

“... I think it’s taken people like Simon and Tim to really ... crystallize people’s focus on ‘if you do not do this you will fail’ and I think failure is a word that isn’t often spoken about in the civil service ... [Also] I think ... the recruitment of Paul ... I think it’s just you’re just bewildered by just how intelligent he is and just how much he knows. Eh, I mean I was in a meeting with him yesterday with some lords ... at Lord McKenzie’s office and he was... the way he talked about the law was just so eloquent and the way that he put these two lords at bay with his argument – I just thought ‘Wow I could really learn so much’” (SK4:9/10).

This statement expresses this participant’s fear of the power that two senior members of the organization held (Tim and Simon) and an overwhelming respect for another (Paul) and is suggestive of the power this cohort exercised while managing PADA.

This sense was echoed in another early interview by a member of the funding team who remarked:

“Um ... there was a scenario where I was in a meeting with Simon and [we] were talking about some analysis I think that DWP had asked for [and] he was shouting, at me, and it felt like it was really coming directly at me saying: “it’s just absurd, it’s just ... you know, ridiculous”, whatever and I got quite worked up with him and then said, you know, “Don’t talk to me like that” kind of thing. [It was indicative of] programme management meetings where there’s quite a kind of patronizing treatment” (ZR6:7–8).

Such claims of ruling elites in the organization were not restricted to individual organizational members but also related to the perceived power consultants held in

the organization. In another early interview, one participant remarked on the difference between PADA and other public sector bodies:

“...the mix of consultants is much bigger. Um, again there’s a large element of contractors, um who have a very different focus in terms of work and balance, and, and kind of like the way that they do things. Um, so I think that mix is significantly different from any of the other major projects that I’ve worked on” (DM12:9–10).

In later interviews, this cohort’s perception of PADA being dominated by consultants and management elites was replaced by statements suggestive of change in the dynamics of power in the organization: there was greater acceptance of the private sector leadership team and that public and private sector cohorts began to work more effectively together. Additionally, such statements suggested that what was initially perceived as the power of the ruling elite, as articulated in earlier interviews, was not complete domination. For example, in a later interview, one participant remarked:

“Well, the first thing that happened to me was that, um, I wandered passed Tim’s office towards the office and Tim noticed that I was here and called me into his office and said, “Will, I’ve got a problem with the department I need you to solve for me” ... I think it’s a really good thing about this organization, the kind of accessibility of senior people in the organization which if you come from the background that sort of you and I come from, it can, I think, sometimes feel quite alien” (WS47:3).

5.6 Fictionality

Cave (1995) contends that ‘we are not free ... to construct any identity at all...; but it is possible ... to give more than one account of the same segment of life and of the identity of the character or characters who figure in it ... [T]he criterion of success in such cases is the power that a particular story will have to console or justify’ (p.112). While these comments were made in the context of an individual’s identity, not a collective’s, Cave’s thoughts are pertinent to this section which analyses data through the notion of fictionality, given my data suggested the deployment of fiction in the

creation of PADA's identities. As 'fictive histories', Brown (2006, p.741) argues that identity claims are orchestrated by their authors to promote their cohort's partisan positions and may not be comprehensive or precise, but constructed purposely with gaps and imprecision. Such narratives may be 'edited' (Dunne 1995, p.153), made-up and are works of their authors' imaginations to serve hegemonic claims. While all participants employed fiction within their narratives of PADA's identities, I found it hard to determine which elements were fictional. Given this difficulty, the following section outlines first my thoughts on why I encountered this problem and secondly offers some instances where I suspected the use of fiction in authors' narratives.

5.6.1 Fictionality in identity statements

I experienced difficulty applying the notion of fictionality in the analysis of my identity-relevant data. Worthington (1996) asserts that organizational stories are works of one's imagination and as linguistic constructions such accounts are fraught with hermeneutic uncertainty: it was this uncertainty that made detecting fiction in identity-relevant claims problematic. The difficulty I found was that while participants used fiction to construct their understandings of PADA – as I am certain my own identity claims were constructed fictionally – I had only my understandings and those of others' to 'compare' and assess the extent to which statements were works of fiction. It was difficult to detect whether participants used their imagination to construct claims, as this would involve being able to assess whether that participant was articulating what they believed to be 'true' or not. I could, of course, have asked interviewees whether or not their claims were what 'they believed', but answers to this, I assumed, would have been dubious, as these responses would also have been imbued with fiction too.

The following paragraphs highlight identity-relevant statements that I believed may have been constructed by fiction and I analyse why such deployment was necessary to suffuse power into statements. I decided to include these statements, while accepting the difficulties outlined above, to demonstrate this element of the framework as best I could.

There was one story, articulated by a small majority of participants, in which I detected that authors deployed fiction more obviously than in others. These narratives concerned PADA's approach to project management planning. Immediately after the organization was created, regular Monday afternoon meetings were established in which all project strand leaders and their assistants reported on progress in relation to activities on the organization's plan. These meetings became part of the routine in PADA and were entwined within the identity-relevant discourse in the organization. One public sector participant made comments suggestive of the inconsistent way in which he felt these meetings were conducted. He said:

“And I mean I suppose one incident that sticks out for me was ... we [are] ... following a plan ... [and] you have to put in a change request if any new ... [work] turns up and it has to be approved at programme level and ... you have to do impact assessment on ... the sort of effort of things ... and we get into the process of doing [this] and [then we] ... just get told ‘chuck everything in your plan out the window’.

I'd like a bit more, I guess ... ‘this [is the project management] approach we're using and we're using it all the time’ ... not kind of ... ‘We'll use the change request and [at other times] we'll chuck it in the bin when it doesn't [work]’ ... I mean the sort of, you know the Monday afternoon kind of tortuous programme meetings ... and ... I wonder what Julian's going to have a hair up his arse about today?” (TN7:5, 14–15).

The sentiment that is expressed in this narrative, I suggest, is that Monday afternoon planning meetings were inconsistent in how they were managed: changes were made

to the project management ‘rules’ by which attendees were asked to adhere. As new work was added, according to this participant, a ‘change request’ was demanded by the leaders of this group on some occasions, whereas at other times this was not the case. I suggest this may be a fictional comment, given that, at least from my perspective, as a work-participant in these meetings, consistent application of project management rules were always applied (although I recognize this comment can only be read in relation to my own perception). If, indeed, fiction was employed to construct this comment, I argue this was done as a linguistic act of defiance by this public sector participant against how he perceived the private sector leaders ran the sessions: he deliberately embellished the story to make a point.

Additionally, it may be the case that private sector participants, involved in the organization of the meetings, also made imprecise and edited statements about the sessions. For example, one remarked:

“[I think it’s fair that people felt frustrated by the meetings] and I’ve seen how frustrated people get when ... the programme manager hassles people for delivery ... [but] it’s pretty much impossible to scare everyone into realizing how difficult it’s all going to be because no one will actually want to work here” (WMcG41:3).

This statement, while offering a different interpretation from those articulated by public sector participants, suggested that meetings were conducted in a supportive manner. I would argue this maybe imbued with imprecision, edited and constructed with fiction. Again, from my perspective and that of other participants’, it was the case that the meetings were viewed as an opportunity for senior individuals to scare others about all that had to be delivered. For example, as one of these senior individuals remarked in their interview:

“[in PADA there is an] ... endless need to plan and do more planning and accept the world’s changing around you and do more planning” (SR23:8).

Another remarked:

“... there was a hell of a lot of work went into it within the PMO ... [we think] ... there was a lot of realization by a number of people that ... they weren’t clear in their own minds exactly what it was they needed to deliver” (CD30:4).

In relation to these meetings I contend that public sector participants seemed to create fictive histories that described the meetings in ways that implied they were used as mechanisms of control and where people were targeted if they had not achieved tasks in the plan. Additionally, they made comments that implied they did not understand why so much fuss was made of monitoring the plan. Private sector participants’ claims sought to ‘fictionalize’ public sector claims by describing the meetings as ‘functional’, ‘essential to the programme’, and while frustrating, supportive in style. Such comments served these participants’ desire for planning to be a central part of PADA’s character.

5.7 Identity statements explored through each theme of Brown’s framework

This chapter has explored identity statements utilizing each of the five themes of Brown’s (2006) conceptual framework separately. In this final section, I explore identity statements through each element of the framework and highlight the interplay between them. The section discusses one issue mentioned by most participants, namely how and by whom decisions were made in the organization. Participants’ claims about this issue suggest it represented a central characteristic of the organization. Firstly, I highlight some of what was said about this characteristic of PADA’s identity, employing all of the notions, and secondly, make observations about the interplay between these elements.

5.7.1 Exploration of decision-making through the five themes

In his description of management and team-working in PADA, Toby, a public sector participant and senior analyst, remarked:

“And I say, you know I guess the big decisions are taken by, you know, sort of, principally the executive team and I guess mainly Tim around you know “Do I buy this? Am I happy with the direction this is going? Am I prepared for this to go in front of the Board?” ...And I ... think very much one of the things I’ve kind of noticed is that, you know when, when Tim likes something or when Tim’s happy with something he’s very keen to ... get right behind it and tell everyone about it ... and you know, I mean, I think once ... we sort of sold him on the idea ... he’s very much behind it I think” (TN7:21).

This statement (referred to throughout this section as ‘Toby’s statement’) implies a lot about how he perceived organizational decisions were made and suggests the importance this issue held for him and others in PADA. At its core, it suggests an interpretation of decision-making as an activity conducted constructively within PADA and in a clearly defined hierarchy: decisions were made by him or the executive team and ultimately by the CEO. Implicit in the statement is that this mode of working was efficient and universally accepted within the organization.

Others made comments that suggested different interpretations of this aspect of PADA’s working methods. For example, a member of the policy team recounted an incident, where Tim had agreed a paper and one of the executive team had not, which was suggestive of the indecision amongst the senior team and directly contradicted the first portrayal of how PADA made decisions. She remarked:

“So Tim was happy ... you think you’ve got the chief executive on side you’re probably okay. We went through all the piece of work, it went out to the management team for them to look at it ... and one member ... was not happy ... [he] had gone in to see... speak to the chief executive, um, beforehand, and, um, had, er, then basically said he couldn’t sign it off. And bizarrely Tim just didn’t say

anything. So for me that was sort of complete ... breakdown in what was supposed to happen” (SC10:9).

This interpretation of decision-making implies that PADA did not make decisions in a typically hierarchical manner, as suggested in Toby’s statement, but that decisions were made by individuals who exerted the most influence over the CEO at a point in time: in this claim, decision-making was perceived as overly influenced by one member of the management team and in direct conflict with what had previously been agreed. Other interpretations suggested that PADA had no control over key decision-making at all. For instance, one participant noted that it was Her Majesty’s Treasury that made the important decisions about the organization. As he remarked: “... remember that when we get leaned on ... in some instances ... but certainly by Treasury, we’re very heavily leant on by Treasury” (JE24:4). Such different interpretations suggest the plurivocity of participants’ understandings of this central aspect of PADA’s character.

Inherent, too, within these statements are references to temporality: ultimately participants interpreted PADA’s capability and method of making decisions differently over time. In the first interpretation, Toby places time centrally in his statement of how decisions were made in the organization. His claim implied that, over time, he had ‘kind of noticed’ that the CEO made all decisions when he was behind an idea, suggesting that this was the only mode of operation. This may signal some of the possible dynamics of power at play within the organization: it was possibly the case that over time public sector participants either became used to or were conditioned to private sector methods of working and moreover accepted these as the way ‘things were going to be done within PADA’.

Arguably, all such interpretations of PADA's decision-making were constructed with the aid of fiction. Indeed, in Toby's statement, its interpretation of a positive and hierarchal approach to this activity is contradictory. It suggests, firstly, that this participant felt he had autonomy within his area of responsibility and yet articulates that decisions were actually made by the executive team and really only by the CEO. One possible interpretation of this might suggest that decisions were actually made outside this participant's control and in the hierarchical way described, but that by articulating his autonomy he sought to express his power within this process.

My argument in this sub-section is that identity statements can be analysed employing all five themes within the framework together and that, as a tool-set, these themes can be used to explore the meaning of just one identity statement. While some statements are more susceptible to analysis by certain elements of the framework, each notion, I suggest, can be deployed to illuminate an identity statement. Such a holistic approach offers insight into the interplay between different elements of the framework in what participants said that I touch upon in the following section.

5.7.2 Interplay between the themes

Brown (2006) argues that the notions of reflexivity, voice, plurivocity, temporality, and fictionality are a 'set of distinct but related analytical tools' (p.737), which in combination constitute a conceptual model. In this brief section I highlight the interplay between these concepts by analysing further Toby's statement noted in the previous section. My analysis suggests that using these themes in combination reveals further insights into the participants' perceptions of PADA's identities that are different to a view taken from a single theme.

From the statements I noted in 5.7.1, it is possible that participants may have used fiction to create identity statements and did so to emphasize the interpretation of the organization that they sought to construct, i.e. fiction worked in synergy with plurivocity to promote claims about the organization's identity. This was arguably the case with Toby's statement. In this statement, it could be that he omitted the role of others in PADA who had delegated authority to make decisions in order to argue the idea that the organization's decision-making was accomplished centrally by the CEO, particularly given the direct line this participant had to this senior manager. By adding fiction within his interpretation, this participant was suggesting his own belief in his ability to make important decisions. In turn, this gives greater credence to his interpretation of this facet of PADA's identity.

Toby's interpretation of decision-making in PADA, as with the other interpretations noted above, seem to have been produced reflexively, from experiences he had encountered in the organization. His statement was arguably a direct reflection of his experience of how things worked in PADA, which in turn may have shaped his interpretation of the organization overall. What was experienced was then reflexively articulated and woven within an interpretation of this facet of the organization's character. This was not just the case with Toby's statement but with those of others, all of which articulated different interpretations, but were primarily founded, perhaps, on their personal experiences. Moreover, it may well be the case that where personal experiences aligned with the perceived thoughts of other members of this cohort, or other similar voices, so this gave participants' interpretations greater prominence and authenticity. For instance, comments by public sector participants about this issue, while suggesting a different interpretation, were ultimately within the realms of what

would be acceptable to other public sector participants, such as the view that it was the Treasury that made the majority of the decisions affecting the organization.

Elements of temporality and reflexivity also interplay within this identity statement. For example, the notion of temporality is integral to what was articulated about PADA's centralized decision-making process. What is implied by Toby's statement is that, over time, this participant observed how the CEO made decisions. This is inherently a reflexive statement as it refers directly to a personal experience and yet, to strengthen this claim, he arguably co-opts the notion of time to this reflexive remark. By emphasizing that a new culture was developing over time, this participant sought to lend greater prominence to the overall claim. The reflexive deployment of temporality in his statements provides greater 'moral agreement' in the interpretation: its purpose to make the interpretation more valid. Thus the deployment of time interplays with plurivocity and voice to promulgate a version of the truth personal to this participant. Such an interplay, were it deployed consciously or not, suggests the sophistication of language used by participants in the study to construct a view of PADA's identities which served their individual or cohort's position.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has examined organizational identity-relevant statements articulated by participants in my study. The data were structured using Brown's (2006) framework through notions of reflexivity, voice, plurivocity, temporality and fictionality. Exploring PADA's identities through this framework has, in some ways, been challenging. This was partly due to the difficulties I encountered resulting from the hermeneutic uncertainty of identity claims and understanding which elements of the

text were fictional and which were not. This problem was articulated by Sarbin (1986), more generally about narrative research, who noted ‘because storytelling is commonly associated with fiction, fantasy and pretending, some critics are skeptical about the use of the narratives as a model for thought and action’ (p.11). I too faced this issue with other notions such as reflexivity: it was hard to be certain that comments were being made reflexively at times because of my incomplete knowledge of some interviewees, their background and thought processes. However, the framework nonetheless offered me a richer method of exploring participants’ understandings of the organization’s identities. The result was that PADA was reconstructed within the chapter not as a single, homogenized construct of identity claims of one ruling elite, but as diverse and fragmented entity created by many participants’ narratives. From other perspectives the framework presented its constraints; ultimately, as with all writing, the deployment and organization of identity narratives within a framework creates its own ‘fixed-in-time-truth’ of what participants’ said was central, enduring and distinctive: if I rewrote the chapter a second or third time ‘from scratch’, the story would be different – the ‘jigsaw pieces’ of narratives would have provided an alternative perception of the organization.

Central to my exploration of identity statements in this chapter was the extent to which participants articulated different understandings of PADA’s identities. Even at the most superficial level, PADA was described variously and simultaneously: a public or private sector organization; one closely aligned with the DWP or not; an organization where voices supported how things were done or did not; an entity running a project, or one in transition to another organization, or one in a steady state; an organization just concerned with delivering a pension scheme; an organization in

chaos, and one overly reliant on planning. All such claims were created by participants' narratives that, in themselves, were inherently fictional.

Critical to Brown's framework (2006) is how identity claims are deployed as exercises in power. Much of this chapter focused on offering a perspective on how and why power was exercised by individuals and cohorts to create their own sense of the truth of PADA's identity. Indeed, as Taylor (1984) tells us:

[T]he idea of a liberating truth is a profound illusion. There is no truth that can be espoused, defended, or reversed against systems of power. On the contrary each such system defines its own variant of truth. And there is no escape from power into freedom, for such systems of power are co-existent within human society. We can only step from one to another. (p.153)

In this chapter, I focused my investigation on how power was putatively exerted by participants from different sector backgrounds, taking into consideration what they said about the organization. Their statements were made in order to promote partisan positions, which, as I will argue later, were deployed to protect participants' sense of self, defend against anxiety and legitimize positions. In the few identity statements highlighted within this chapter, it is clear that PADA's identities were important to participants, that identity narratives were a mechanism worth claiming a stake in: PADA's character(s) or its identities were precious to the participants I interviewed; it had a position of power itself. Indeed, in this sense, organizational identity is not only a tool used to exercise power but a mechanism of control itself.

CHAPTER 6

IDENTITY CONTROL THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL EVENTS

Histories ... are not only about events but also about the possible sets of relationships that those events can be demonstrated to figure. These sets of relationships are not, however, immanent in the events themselves; they exist only in the mind of the historian reflecting them.

(White 1978, p.94)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses two events in which I participated at PADA. I explore identity-relevant statements made at the events and discuss how these served the hegemonic claims of the authors. A varied dataset is used to construct the chapter, including interview material²³, transcriptions of the events²⁴, and written material produced to accompany them. Vignettes are interwoven throughout the chapter, constructed from memories and field notes, to enrich my narrative (Coffey 1999; Humphreys 2005). This is consonant with my reflexive ethnographic approach (Ellis & Bochner 1996). The analysis is based largely on the work of Rosen (1985) and Mumby (1987). I follow a similar format to that of Rosen's (1985) work, 'Breakfast at Spiro's: Dramaturgy and Dominance', for my exploration of an industry day that PADA held for prospective suppliers in early 2009. Rosen (1985) provides a rich analytical approach to explore how this event 'shows the existence of a particular form of social relations, that of hegemony' (p.47). For the second event, PADA's move to offices at St. Dunstan's House, I employ Mumby's (1987) framework to discuss how identity statements were deployed as a 'principal symbolic [form] through which organizational ideology and power structures [were] ... expressed and constituted' (p.113). The chapter is divided into two sections, each covering one event.

²³ Interview material is referenced as in Chapter 5.

²⁴ Transcription material is referenced as follows (MJ:1), where MJ refers to the speaker's initials and 1 refers to the transcription page reference.

6.2 The industry day

This section focuses on the industry day and is divided into three parts. The first provides the context of the event, including why it was required, whom it was intended for and its structure. Following Rosen's (1985) observation of corporate social drama, where 'symbols ... [are] communicated in such a way as to influence ideas' (p.33), the second section suggests how symbols were deployed to assert some participants' understandings of the organization's identity. The final section returns to explore identity-relevant narratives that were articulated in speeches given during the event. Vignettes provide personal reflections.

6.2.1 Context of the event

On 28 January 2009 PADA held an industry day for potential suppliers of a contract to run the pensions scheme. As the head of procurement, I led preparations, although those closer to the CEO held a casting vote on choices that had to be made. In addition to the functional element of the day, the event was an opportunity for PADA to present itself to an audience eager to understand more about the organization. As one of the suppliers teased me over coffee, for them the event felt like finding a golden ticket and being allowed inside Willy Wonka's factory.

Approximately 300 people attended the day of whom at least 250 were representatives from 76 suppliers who were keen to express their interest in the contract. Many familiar companies were there, such as IBM and Capita, with others less so, from the United States and India. The other cohort comprised selected members of PADA, chosen to mingle with the audience: indeed, people were issued with a list of suppliers with whom to engage over the course of the day.

It had been a matter of debate where the event should be held: some argued for inexpensive government accommodation, while others, mainly the senior cohort, made pleas for a venue with symbolic meaning, such as a place associated with another social change, like the creation of the National Health Service. The final decision was Church House, Deans Yard, London, located behind Westminster Abbey: a building used mainly for clergy to debate and vote on matters of the day – ‘Ayes’ to the right of the room; ‘Noes’ to the left (see plate 1). As the brochure of the venue described it: ‘When searching for event or conference venues in central London, Church House Conference Centre is the ideal option. Situated in the heart of Westminster, with exquisite views of Westminster Abbey’ (Church House 2008). We used the Assembly Hall (see plate 2) for the event; this was a huge room (maximum capacity of 664), circular, with high ceilings (which the brochure described as ‘dramatic’) upon which religious quotations were painted. The space had been set up with thirty or so tables and at one end of the room the organizers had built a temporary, but impressive, stage. On top of this was placed a very grand speaker’s podium (which looked like an altar), behind which was a screen to project slides. Above the auditorium was a gallery with extra, if precarious, seating and positioned here was a professional lighting and sound-effects manager. Music was played during each break in speeches – insipid orchestral music, such as call centres play while you are on hold. Refreshments were served when the audience arrived at 9.30am, for lunch and afternoon tea. This was basic and served in a small antechamber (the so-called Hoare Memorial Hall), where again music was played louder than the room could accommodate, making conversation hard.

The day was divided into two: in the morning there were six speakers. I spoke briefly first, followed by the CEO, Tim, then PADA's chair, Jeannie, followed James Parnell (the Secretary of State) and Helen, and then Ian (a senior director and Head of Implementation in the organization). In the afternoon, I was the main speaker and described the procurement process.

To accompany the event, PADA produced a supplier prospectus. This was a 44 page document that was handed to delegates on their arrival (PADA 2009). It described PADA's intention for the scheme and detailed a carefully explained story of the organization's history. Throughout the document was a series of photographs of attractive actors, doing what is regarded as low income work, such as retail, non-skilled construction and non-professional trades: these were the scheme's target consumers (see plate 3). In addition, the document had a collage of quotations from external stakeholders, such as the Confederation of British Industry, Age Concern and the Trades Union Congress. These had been obtained by senior PADA executives who knew people in these organizations and sound bites had been negotiated between the parties, before inclusion in the prospectus. As the Trades Union Congress²⁵ supportively remarked: 'Personal Accounts are an essential part of the new pension settlement. The whole system will not work in the favour of consumers, without a public sponsored scheme, designed to keep costs down, and set standards that private sector competitors will need to honour' (PADA 2009, p.ii). The event started, after registration and coffee, at 10.00am, with a few words of welcome from me; this was followed by a speech by Tim, after which the Secretary of State was scheduled to address the audience.

²⁵ A quote secured by Jeannie, who had previously been its General Secretary.

Vignette: The arrival of the Secretary of State

I should have known better! A speech by a Secretary of State is never without incident: politicians are an unpredictable lot.

It was considered a coup by PADA's executives that we had managed to secure a 20 minute slot in the Secretary of State's diary to speak at the event. Rarely do senior politicians give speeches like this. More significantly, it sent a message to the audience that PADA was important ... *important politically*. Being *important politically* is what it is all about if you work for the Government.

He was due to arrive at 10.25 for his speech at 10.30. Sam (the CEO's aide) and I were standing outside ready to greet him at 10.10. At 10.15, Sam's phone rang: he was running late. *Great!* The next speaker was informed, the audience told (who chuckled at my lame joke that we had 'lost him') and the show continued.

10.30: I ducked out of the auditorium to see what was happening. I asked Sam: "Any sign of Parnell?"

I got a glare. "Don't refer to him like that, *Matt*. He is the Secretary of State, not the plumber." I thought it was a joke and smiled. It took me a couple of seconds to realize she was serious. My mind took me to the picture of the workmen on page 19 of the prospectus and I wondered why we were establishing the scheme – for PADA's esteem or for the tradesmen? (See plate 3).

10.45: He arrived. Apparently he had made a surprise visit to a nursery to say "Hi" to the children. The three of us walked up the stairs to the room, me a step behind, thinking 'typical'.

Tim raced to the podium ahead of the Secretary of State and said how honoured we all were to welcome him to our PADA event.

The subtext being:

1. PADA 'is different' because he is here among us;
2. the event has Political (big P) importance;
3. I'm the one that's delivered him here.

The suppliers clapped loudly. I caught the eye of one or two colleagues who were also 'penguin-like'. The Secretary of State spoke and told a story of seeing Ed Balls' and Yvette Cooper's²⁶ children at their nursery.

6.2.2 Symbolic techniques

The industry day was an 'arena in which [the] manipulation of symbols was particularly evident' (Rosen 1985, p.33): the choice of venue, the staging of the speeches and the material written for the day were symbols which served to support

²⁶ Ed Balls and Yvette Cooper are married and were both members of the last Labour Government Cabinet.

senior participants' understanding of the organization's identity (Brown 1994; Czarniawska 1997; Pfeffer 1981; Turner 1986). This strategy was consciously adopted by senior managers to reinforce their conception of PADA's identity: indeed, the event was used to enact 'the "reality" of a particular set of social relations through its public display' (Rosen 1985, p.33). The overarching symbolic technique was used by PADA's leaders to differentiate the organization from other public sector bodies and the pensions industry; in so doing, it sought to suggest central characteristics of the organization as unique and politically relevant. This section discusses how symbols were manipulated to serve this understanding of the organization's identity and how some participants benefited (Clegg 1981).

The venue

The choice of venue was not made according to affordability and availability criteria; rather it was a tactic deployed to project an understanding of PADA's identity to the audience in the room and the press outside. This conception sought to dissociate the organization from the public sector, while seeking to ensure its political importance within it: as Brown (1994) argues 'organizational ... symbolic activity provides important indicators of collective frames of reference' (p.862). Church House was not part of the Government estate and felt a unique place to hold our event; yet being close to Whitehall made it feel central to Westminster and British politics. The building sought to symbolize PADA's solidity and its chance of success; just as the Church had endured over the centuries, so too, PADA sought to project an identity of security in an uncertain public sector environment. Looking around the room and reading the religious quotations painted on the walls, one could feel the history of the place; this was reinforced by the location of Church House, behind Westminster

Abbey, within Dean's Yard and next to Westminster School – a prestigious public school. By hiring the Assembly Hall for the day, PADA, like a bride hiring a vintage Rolls Royce for the special day, procured its history in order to stage its drama and project a certain identity: the organization's lack of longevity was compensated by the building's past and it sought to project the image of PADA's activities as important and critical. The audience, as intended, was wowed by the room. Over coffee, before the start of the event, it was the main topic of conversation – as one American (whose organization we were keen to attract to the competition) said: "This really is some place you have here, guys". The location, the building and its associated history served its intended purpose; it created an impression of permanence. This supported PADA's leaders' conception of the organization as politically important, the control they had over its future, and consequently the power they held within it.

The care with which the room had been arranged also served this understanding of PADA's identity. Arrangements had been made by participants close to the CEO and seemed to hold a symbolic importance. The podium was placed at the centre of the stage and elevated, not to one side as is generally the case (and is usual for the format of the room – see plate 2): with a speaker behind, it looked like an altar. The lighting, cinema-like, added to this effect. As the lights went down in the room, they shone on those standing on the podium – all from PADA: the spotlight was literally on representatives of the organization. This created, as did the intervening musical interludes, a sense that PADA was the sole focus. Indeed, the audience was discouraged from engaging with their fellow attendees and forced to focus only on the speaker on the podium. The image projected was of an organization in control of the event (and therefore its own destiny). The stage was a symbol of authority, where no

opportunity was allowed for the audience to take their eyes from it, and this seemed a far cry from the often ‘down at heel’ events that other public sector organizations might stage: PADA’s event was a ceremony. One friendly supplier in the audience whispered in my ear – “It’s very razzamatazz, Matt!” I recall feeling proud.

In contrast to the grandeur of the location, the food served was far from lavish. It had been decided prior to the event that no significant sums of money would be spent on this aspect of the event as this might run the risk of an unfavourable press story. (Thus we had limp sandwiches, pub-like pork pies, and Scotch eggs reminiscent of a motorway service station). This decision had been taken by ‘the top’: its message, suggestive of PADA’s thrift and projecting an identity distinct from the putative excesses of the private sector pensions industry. The message seemed to have been received: I noticed some of the audience nipped to the deli at the back of the building for a sandwich.

The staging of speeches

The speeches were another symbolic way through which some participants, close to the CEO, sought to project PADA’s identity. The entire event consisted of speeches by senior people within the organization, apart from the speech by the Secretary of State who, while in political control, was not employed by PADA. With the exception of my opening address, speakers were ordered in a hierarchy of seniority: first, came the address by the CEO, then the part-time acting chair, followed by directors and finally managers (the Secretary of State slotted in when he arrived). The symbolism behind this was twofold: first, no time was allocated for audience participation, thereby preventing questions being asked that might undermine the message speakers

gave – there were no awkward comments that could dilute PADA’s legitimacy or lead to ambiguity; second, it characterized who controlled the organization. PADA was portrayed as being managed top-down – staff spoke in turn, each reinforcing the message of the last. In PADA everyone had their place, in a hierarchy, and this symbolism served to reinforce an organizational identity with central characteristics of tradition, trust and ascendancy. This was also reflected in a conscious decision not to use the standard feedback forms, almost always used at such events. This had been decided as one of the first principles of the design of the event as it was considered ‘inappropriate to what we were trying to do’ (PADA CEO), although a few people at the time expressed the view that this omission was odd. Ultimately this was a further way to silence dissent about the ideas PADA’s leadership sought to deliver through the drama of the event.

The written material

To accompany the industry day, PADA produced a supplier prospectus, a glossy document constructed to reinforce senior managers’ conception of the organization’s identity. The document was handed out on the day, by members of my team, as delegates walked through the door, and over the course of the event people were encouraged to read it by various speakers. Its structure reinforced the messages articulated throughout the event: there were forewords from the CEO and Jeannie, followed by a detailed history which, step by step, explained how the organization had evolved towards the industry day. As Jeannie remarked in her foreword:

‘Millions stand to benefit from the successful introduction of personal accounts. Simple, affordable and sustainable, the scheme is a critical component of the reforms that will fundamentally change the pensions landscape. Personal accounts will play a pivotal role in helping millions save for their retirement.’ (PADA 2009, p.4)

The procurement element of the prospectus was light in content which, to some, was incongruous given this was the purported reason for the event; indeed, it occupied just a few pages at the back of the document. Instead, the prospectus acted to reinforce one of the messages that the CEO sought to project: the organization's enduring characteristic was the 'journey' it was on, from its embryonic creation to the climax of scheme delivery. The CEO's opening text said that PADA was 'taking a major step forward in the creation of personal accounts' (PADA 2009, p.5). As Gabriel (2004) observes:

[T]here are official organizational stories ... reproduced in organizational rituals ... and official publications, which express some of the desirable qualities that at least those ... leading the organization would wish to see associated with them. These may include narratives of great achievements, of missions successfully accomplished, of crises successfully overcome ... and heroic leaders. (p.3)

Those close to the CEO sought to project a certain understanding of the organization's identity and used symbols to emphasize their message: this symbolic action was an 'important means by which legitimate their privileged power relations ... to guarantee their organization's continued successful existence' (Brown 1994, p.863). These ideas were communicated consciously and choreographed with purpose within the fabric of the drama. Those creating them sought to benefit from this by projecting an identity of the organization as enduring, controlled and distinct from the public sector, in order to legitimize the organization's existence and suggest its chance of survival in a world uncertain in terms of policy, and in turn to secure their own personal survival. Ultimately, this understanding was uncontested by others: the survival of those at the top meant jobs for the rest of us.

While many members of PADA were invited to the industry day to socialize with suppliers, only six spoke. Speakers were told what to say prior to the event by the CEO's office, although they were permitted to develop their own narrative and slides. This led to issues, in particular, for my opening address and throughout others' speeches, which are analysed in the following sections.

Vignette: A change to the opening address

I had been thinking about my opening address for ages: I had to get it right, given I was leading this procurement.

Rather than preparing five or so points I would talk about unscripted (as I would do generally) I decided to write the address to read verbatim. This would settle my nerves and allow me to forget it until the address itself.

I arrived at Church House 30 minutes before the event started. Prior to the obligatory (and mandated) mingle with the audience, I thought it wise to 'pay a visit' (to the loo, I mean). While washing my hands, a voice called out from a cubicle:

"Morning Matt!"

I looked around, wondering if this was a divine voice, but no, it was the 'Archangel Tim' (although obviously I couldn't see him).

"Morning, Tim" I replied (slightly embarrassed).

"You all set to go, Matt? (pause) Ah, Matt, by the way I've..." came the voice behind the cubicle door, "I've changed your opening address."

Intuitively my first reaction was to say:

"Thanks, Tim, that's 'helpful'".

On the way back up the corridor I recognized that this must have been a joke – to settle my nerves – obviously....

20 minutes later and 'curtain-up': the event manager nodded. I walked up to 'the altar'. I was nervous, expectant faces looking up at me, me looking back at them. I looked down at my address transcript (already on the podium) and saw the pages covered in 'red pen mark-ups' over my text: it hadn't been a joke. There was silence in the hall. Voices of irritation, then panic, broke out in my head – a cold sweat! I started to speak and with the 'luck of the gods' managed slowly to pick my way through the transcript and the amendments.

Of course, on reflection, I should have cleared the address with Tim days before the event, should have realized it wasn't a joke, should have skipped coffee and double-checked the transcript. But, on the other hand, the incident (which will always remain as 'one-to-tell-the-children-on-their-first-day-at-work') masked something central about PADA: the control some demonstrated was continually and effectively exercised within every facet of

organizational life.

Just as I had originally written my address to reflect my conception of PADA's identity, this was 'trumped' by others, who promoted theirs through me.

6.2.3 The speeches

PADA's industry day was structured by speeches delivered by senior members of the organization: 'the messages encoded in and enacted through [them influenced] ... members of the ... in a manner likely to recreate the relations of domination' as they asserted these members' understandings of the organization's identities (Rosen 1985, p.32). The themes of each speech had been directed, and in at least one case manipulated, by Tim's office. Such control, I suggest, sought to ensure speakers projected a consistent message about the organization: 'a deviation in attitude [would have been] ... a potential threat to hegemony, for control is efficacious to the degree that it controls the totality of attitudes, belief and behaviour' (Rosen 1985, p.36). My interpretation suggests that speeches were used to reinforce some participants' understanding of the organization's identity. This was achieved principally through the articulation of events in PADA's past to project an understanding of what was central and enduring about the organization in the present (Ricoeur 1991). Through statements made in the speeches, participants sought to control others' understandings of PADA's identities, legitimize the organization's existence and, in consequence, secure their position. As Munslow (1997) invites us to explore, historical narrative '... is a kind of self-legitimation whereby constructing it according to a certain set of socially accepted rules and practices establishes the speaker's ... authority within their society, and acts as a mutual reinforcement of that society's self-identity' (p.16).

A consistent feature of the speeches was that participants retold events from their understanding of PADA's past. This was used to project some people's understanding of the central and enduring characteristics of the organization: the idea promoted was the PADA's quest to deliver the scheme. This was not articulated as a straightforward journey but one in which each successive event in the organization's history had made it stronger and more capable than before; Tim's organizational interpretation constructed an account using epic and heroic narratives which prioritized his position (Jeffcutt 1994). Through this projection, PADA was 'achieving its mission': each step (or event) along the road signalled an organization with greater value and legitimacy than before. This was evident in the opening address I gave, which, as I have mentioned, had been altered. My address strongly projected the idea of 'PADA on an epic journey', towards the successful implementation of the scheme. As I told the audience:

"Today is a really important day for us in PADA ... PADA has come a really long way since the prior information notice event that was held at St. Dunstan's House in July that many of you attended [a precursor event to the industry day]. The Government has achieved Royal Assent for its Pensions Bill 2008 and one of the consequences of this is that PADA now has the job of making Personal Accounts real for millions of people that work within the UK" (MJ:1).

This statement describes the importance of the industry day by reference to events in the organization's past: the event was "an important day" because "the Government [had] achieved Royal Assent". Of course, from my perspective, this was not the case at all. The event was important as it started the procurement to select a supplier – this was also the case for the majority of the audience, the suppliers, whose attendance at the event was motivated by how to win the contract. My statement, however, sought to project an identity for PADA characterized by successfully fulfilling its role, 'on track for delivery', given that it had navigated the agreement to the Bill which enabled it

legally to perform its role. The reference to the successful Bill (which for many participants had been no more than a necessary diversion) sought to suggest that just as PADA had passed this hurdle, so it would rise to future challenges. My address, and the changes that had been made to it, omitted to cite the many difficulties PADA had met in getting the legislation through the House of Lords, in particular, and the concessions which had been made as a consequence, such as changes to auto-enrolment, the contribution limit and opt-out²⁷. This would have reflected poorly on the organization's ability to manage its business and presented an identity of the organization as reliant on others to secure its future. My statement constituted an identity for the organization, ultimately, of a journey during which it overcame 'important sounding' obstacles (like legislation); this served to project others' understanding of the organization's central characteristics of PADA as on course to achieve its objectives. This, in turn, enhanced PADA's legitimacy as an organization that was best placed to deliver the scheme and by association, legitimize those senior managers who were in control.

The speeches which followed also adopted this tactic, although the CEO's talk, perhaps more than others, used the history of the organization to suggest PADA's character currently. In his 20 minute speech Tim articulated the corporate history of the organization. As he proudly informed the audience (like a vicar preaching to his flock):

"So, let's go right back. What's going on? ...[W]e're all living longer, there's a baby boomer generation ... [T]he Government recognized that a long time ago, set up the Pensions Commission ... and so through the Pensions Commission report itself, or its reports through

²⁷ See Hansard (2008b) and Watson Wyatt (2008) for further details of concessions made to the Bill while in the House of Lords.

two White papers, through two acts of Parliament, through an unprecedented quantity of consultation, we've got to where we are now ... [T]hat's the journey we've been on..." (TJ:2–3).

Through this retelling of events from PADA's past, I suggest, Tim sought to project his own understanding of the organization's identity: PADA 'today' was a product of its past. The successful journey he and other senior executives had played their part in described the identity he sought to project to the audience. Throughout his speech this was emphasized many times as he reiterated: "So that's the destination, a not-for-profit trust-based entity acting in the best interest of its members" (TJ:3). The speech, however, did not touch on some events that could feasibly have been part of a corporate history – taboos which were silenced within the organization – albeit these were often discussed by external stakeholders and the press. These included how the Bill had made concessions, materially restricting PADA's role, which had been won by the wider pensions industry and those who criticized the cost estimates associated with the scheme: the inclusion of these would have projected the organization's inability and undermined the central characteristic of a 'successful journey'. The speech also omitted the creation of PADA by the DWP: this served to emphasize PADA's control of its 'own destiny' and self-reliance (ultimately PADA was entirely funded by the DWP). PADA staff, including myself, neither raised these prior to the event or afterwards; as taboos, they were best kept to individuals' soliloquies.

The organization's history was used consciously by most senior managers to legitimize the organization's existence and to present PADA to the audience as an organization adept at overcoming difficult events successfully. As Tim concluded (raising his voice a little to emphasize the point) in his final few words:

“Yes, there will be a journey for any of you (suppliers) to get to what our requirements are, partly because of the unique requirements that have arisen from the political settlement” (TJ:7).

This statement sought to project further the identity PADA’s leadership wished to impress on the audience: as Rhodes (1996) remarks, ‘stories get to the heart of people’s meaning of an individual’s reality’ (p.1). Just as PADA was characterized by the journey it was on so, too, must a supplier ‘buy into’ this concept if it were to be successful in the procurement. Other speakers reiterated references to PADA’s past as well: Ian, the head of requirements, for instance, spoke about the specification for the proposed contract, emphasizing that:

“As we’ve heard, it’s been a number [of] years – over three years since the Pensions Commission reported back in 2005. [A] huge amount achieved since that time” (IP:7).

And the Secretary of State, whose speech had been written by Sam, said:

“So first of all, thank you, Tim and Jeannie, for the fantastic work that you are doing ... [W]e are very, very glad that we created you because we have no idea how we would have got this far without the fantastic work that you and your team are doing ... I think we are on the right road in terms of policy and that road was right even before the storm clouds of the recession hit us and I think that work is going to be vital, not just to help people save for their retirement but actually start to make real the change in the culture of saving in our country” (JP:13).

The speeches, I argue, emphasized events in PADA’s past to project some people’s understanding of its present identity. Statements focused exclusively on successful events in which PADA had played a significant role, such as the passing of legislation. This sought to project some participants’ understanding of the organization as being on a journey, at the end of which could be only one outcome – the successful delivery of the scheme. In projecting this identity, speakers omitted events in the organization’s past that might have called into question this understanding of PADA’s central characteristics. No statements were made about the fragility of the consensus of

external stakeholders, such as the CBI and pressure groups like Age Concern, whose quotations peppered the prospectus, as this would have raised doubts in the minds of the audience concerning the wisdom of bidding for contracts. Also omitted was how PADA had evolved from the DWP two years prior to the event as this would have projected PADA's reliance on this organization for its funding and survival. The articulation of this abbreviated history was an attempt, I suggest, to present the organization as distinct from the public sector, more part of the pensions industry (but without its putative excesses), and ultimately with a future which could only lead to successful implementation of the scheme. These characteristics served to legitimize the organization's existence and those working within it: the ritualized social drama served to reinforce this legitimacy and '[transmit] the notions of harmony and unity' to the audience about the identity of PADA (Rosen 1985, p.47).

Vignette: The hawks observed

A distinctive feature of PADA was the level of control members of the HR team had over the flow of people in and out of the organization. Some of us subversively referred to the team as 'the police'.

For much of the time during the event (when I wasn't speaking), I sat at the front table in the room listening to other speakers. My mind drifted ... and I glanced around the room at various tables to gauge people's reactions to what was being said. Two figures sitting in the gallery, way above the rest of us in the auditorium caught my eye: it was the police, bizarrely, comically wearing dark glasses (presumably to shield them from the glaring lights, though who carries sunglasses around in January!). I could see them clearly through the iron railings, but could see that they had black note pads. The notes were clearly not used to capture content, as the broad themes were well known in PADA. I recall musing over what was being written....

Some days after the event all the speakers (except for James Parnell) were called into Tim's office for debriefing. The police were there with their black pads and, in turn, went through each speaker, highlighting good points in their performance and negative ones: highlighting where we could have said something more or differently to emphasize the 'party line'. It got to my feedback: "could have said more about PADA's efficiency in managing projects like this", "could have said more to emphasize this isn't going to be another failed public sector IT contract", "could have smiled ... and next time, *Matt* (said patronizingly), leave the humour at home...!"

The grand narrative recorded about the industry day was about its success; the procurement subsequently ran its course and one supplier²⁸ that had attended won the contract and runs the scheme today. PADA attendees at the event, including myself, recount its value in establishing PADA's credibility; never was there any reference to the stylized and controlled manner in which the drama had been managed and played out. As Tim claimed in his history of the event to me on my last day in PADA:

"I loved that day, it was a very powerful statement of where we had got to; we had all these big 'corporates' in the room, it was a room right at the heart of the Westminster village, we had the Secretary of State for pensions ... strutting his stuff and everyone could see we had arrived" (TJ60:7).

6.3 PADA's move and occupation of St. Dunstan's House

Tim also spoke about the second event I explore in this chapter: PADA's move to and occupation of new offices; as he enthusiastically remarked, "I was very excited [by the move] ... I thought St. Dunstan's House was just about perfect" (TJ60:1). As with the industry day, this event invites discussion as it served participants as a discursive resource that shaped understandings of PADA (Brown & Humphreys 2006; Gieryn 2000). Mumby (1987) contends that organizational narrative functions ideologically to 'produce, maintain and reproduce ... power structures [and] legitimates the sectional interests of hegemonic groups' (pp.113–118). The following section is divided into three parts. The first describes the context of the event and includes vignettes describing my personal reflections on the day we moved. This is followed by an exploration of identity-relevant statements made about the event. Finally, I use Mumby's (1987) theoretical framework to analyse how statements functioned ideologically to serve hegemonic interests. I suggest senior participants used statements about the move, location and the perceived characteristics of the building

²⁸ TATA Consultancy Services (TCS).

to shape others' understandings of the organization's identities: in doing so, they sought to maintain and benefit their own position.

6.3.1 Context of the move

Vignette: An Englishman's home...

Our first day in St. Dunstan's was one I can recall as if it were yesterday.

The building had been vacant for three months and felt like it; cleaning contractors had been stood down when the previous tenants left and the boiler hadn't worked for weeks (apparently), so it was cold... really cold. Only the guard, Lee, who manned the reception ably but with little pleasure (or so it seemed), had been in the building since Christmas. Lee's employer hadn't told him we were arriving and so no preparation had been made for our arrival. Christmas decorations hung on the walls and from ceilings; desks and furniture were arranged as if the previous occupants were coming back: I was expecting to find Miss Havisham!

Into this unwelcoming cold, dirty environment we entered, keen to 'transform' the place into *our* place. By mid-morning the communications team had got their 'castle in order', the first to do so – finding a collection of fully operational desks, hunting down the most comfortable chairs – some of the team put photographs of their children on their desks (as people do) and one placed a cuddly toy by the side of his PC.

Late morning: need for coffee. I spied a sandwich bar over the road and decided to explore. As I walked through the reception area some of the communications team were putting up the 'man-sized' PADA brand poster (used for conferences and trade shows). Tim had asked them to do it: dead centre in the reception (Lee looked as though aliens had landed!). I said:

"Surely you haven't got time for all of that, chaps!"

Some shrugged their shoulders, as if to 'bat' the remark away; one said:

"We're claiming this building, Matt."

It was an off-the-cuff remark, but those five words remain one of the most vivid memories of my time in PADA.

St. Dunstan's House

On 15 April 2008, PADA moved from offices in Holborn to St. Dunstan's House: the new accommodation was located at the south end of Borough High Street in south-east London. PADA had out-grown New Court, the Holborn location: it needed more space to house its staff. Additionally, PADA needed a place of its own. Sharing

offices with the DWP felt uncomfortable for many, both physically and politically. While New Court was considered ugly, it was close to the law courts, which some claim are the finest examples of London neo-Gothic architecture and the environment was pleasant and felt grand. New Court was central, within walking distance of Covent Garden and near fashionable sandwich bars, restaurants and shops. PADA had been allocated one floor by the DWP, who owned and occupied the rest of the building.

St. Dunstan's House had been erected in the 1960s and looked it! (See plate 4). It shared a footprint with the John Harvard Library, named after the university, but as a 'down at heel' inner-city library, the name was where the similarity ended²⁹. Outside the building, people slept rough and drug users congregated in the alley beside it for their trade, as the litter testified (see plate 5). Opposite was an 'Italian-style' coffee shop that sold tempting-sounding sandwiches cheaply. Next to this was one of London's immigration offices; here by 8 a.m. each morning queues formed of people, of many nationalities, seeking to renew their visas. This end of the street felt busy all the time and was distinctly multi-cultural. St. Dunstan's and its immediate environment was quite different from that we had left, even a world away from the north end of Borough High Street, where trendy Borough Market, Southwark Cathedral and London Bridge station were situated.

PADA took the lease to St. Dunstan's from the Equalities Commission, who had vacated the building before Christmas. The building offered few comforts. It was poorly decorated: the carpets, a patchwork of colours, had not been maintained; the

²⁹ In the summer of 2009 the library was granted funds by the Lottery Commission. The library was transformed into a modern, welcoming environment.

heating did not work, nor did the cooling system; the top floor smelt damp, due to a leaky roof. The accommodation was filled with a mix of furniture styles, the boilers in the staff kitchen did not work, and comically, the lifts seemed to stall at a mysterious floor 5 (which did not exist).

PADA occupied St. Dunstan's for the following two and a half years until the creation of the Trustee Corporation in July 2010. While the interior was progressively improved – new furniture, carpets and painted walls – it remained a plainly decorated office. Where pictures and comfortable seating might be expected in most financial services and public sector organizations, the walls in St. Dunstan's were covered in plans, organizational charts and diagrams. Over the years of our occupation, of course, the building became more comfortable, but its location and plainness served increasingly as a reference for senior participants to describe 'who' PADA was. Views on the characteristics of the building became entwined with identity-relevant statements articulated about the organization recounted to others and between ourselves.

Vignette: Rearrangement of the seating arrangements

The seating plan for different business functions in St. Dunstan's House had been managed by the CEO's office. This had been kept from most of us until the day of the move. No reason was given, except that 'decisions were still being made until the last minute'.

On the day of the move a seating plan, by function, was pinned to the notice board in the reception. As people arrived they were asked to look on the board to see where they were to go! It was reminiscent of finding out who you are allocated to sit next to at a wedding reception (... sighs of relief ... the odd gasp of anxiety as people learned their fate!).

The CEO's office was positioned on the 3rd floor, practically the 'penthouse' since Health and Safety had all but condemned the 4th (technically top) floor due to damp. His office, modest (but perfectly adequate, so he said), overlooked the site of the prison where Charles Dickens had emplotted *Little Dorrit* and the author's father had been imprisoned for debt (a story told to all who came across the office threshold). Joining Tim were HR (as near to the boss as they could physically be), the finance team (underwhelmed by being so close), and my boss's office: empty space commanded the rest of the floor. My team were positioned on the 1st floor (effectively ground floor), in a corner, overlooking the bins and the building site opposite (which later became the British Royal Legion's Headquarters). Before the rest of my team turned up, I wandered through my fiefdom – a collection of old desks, dirty phones, blinds at the windows which didn't work and those bins... (rats, too, no doubt).

This would not do! I decided to go up to the 4th floor. Sure there was damp, but 'faint heart never won fair lady', I remember soliloquizing. As my team started to arrive, I ushered them to the top floor (covertly) and over the course of the day moved PCs, phones, cabinets and chairs upstairs via the goods lift. The team moved. At the end of the day I stuck a sign on the wall facing the door of the lift: it read '4th floor – Commercial Team'. I had claimed the top floor for my people!

I recall my boss congratulating my initiative!

Tim and others, I was told, were annoyed.

6.3.2 Identity-relevant statements about the move

Jameson (1981) argues for the 'political interpretation of literary texts ... as [an] absolute horizon of all reading and ... interpretation' (p.17). Adopting such a position 'confronts narratives politically, as an ideological force that articulates a system of meaning which privileges certain interests over others' (Mumby 1987, p.114). I argue that a senior cohort in PADA used statements about our move to shape their own and others' understandings of the organization's identity: statements associated with this event were an important mechanism used by leaders to control others. Senior participants sought to establish and strengthen their position in the organization

through this strategy: ‘groups with the most power [are] those ... best able to integrate their sectional claims into the very structuring of the organization’ (Mumby 1987, p.116). The following section outlines identity-relevant statements made by senior participants close to the CEO about this event. While interviews with this cohort were conducted over the course of a year and all after the move had taken place, statements tended to be consistent with the CEO’s view; in turn, they became ‘seemingly taken for granted, reified, and thus definitively authoritative totalizations’ (Brown & Humphreys 2006, p.234). As Hawley (1963) remarks, ‘every social act is an exercise of power, every social relationship is a power equation, and every social group or system is an organization of power’ (p.422).

One way in which PADA’s CEO promoted his understanding of the organization’s identity was through statements made about the move to and occupation of St. Dunstan’s House. During his interview he explicitly linked characteristics of the building and our move to it with his understanding of what was central, distinctive and enduring about the organization. His statements suggested he thought the building projected the right image externally to stakeholders, as well as characterizing what was central and distinctive about PADA. His comments fall broadly into two categories: the location and physical state of St. Dunstan’s. About the location, he remarked:

“... the reason [St. Dunstan’s] ... was just about perfect was that it was geographically absolutely perfect. It was outside the Westminster village, [yet] it was easy to get to the Westminster village. It was outside the City of London, but just adjacent to the City of London. [Borough High Street] ... had some very scruffy little shops and [the] scruffy ... [building had] been neglected. It just seemed absolutely perfect to me” (TJ60:1).

About the state of the building and the image it projected of the organization's identity, he said:

"I wanted people to see PADA as separate, as being to do with financial services, to do with the city, but arrogantly not of the city in a glass, chrome and concrete palace in Cheapside³⁰. So I wanted us to be adjacent to the city but I wanted us to be suitably scruffy. We are about low to middle income earners, we are not about the people that go across the bridge into the city, we're about the people on this side of the bridge. I just felt it was an incredibly symbolic location for PADA and there on Borough High Street was our target market, small employers and people working for them... [in] 'Chicken Cottage' – that's our market and we were right amongst our market..." (TJ60:2).

Both statements link the putative characteristics of the building to Tim's understandings of the organization's identities: the building served as a discursive resource suggestive of PADA's identity. Other senior participants made similar statements during interviews. Three themes dominated these discussions: that the inexpensive location of the building reflected a central PADA characteristic as a future provider of low-cost pensions; that the building's poor physical repair mirrored a central characteristic of the organization as temporary; and finally, that the location of the building enabled PADA to relate to future customers of the scheme. I argue statements made by senior members about St. Dunstan's followed the CEO's; this cohort's views were deployed ideologically to control others' understandings of the organization's identity.

Senior participants made statements that aligned PADA's move to low cost accommodation with the organization's role to create an efficient, cost-effective

³⁰ Cheapside is an expensive street north of St. Dunstan's, which is popular location for major financial institutions.

scheme for its future members. A senior member of the finance team, when asked whether he thought St. Dunstan's signified something of PADA's identity, remarked:

"Yeah I think so. And ... part of that's deliberate and part of it is kind of because we're in this building, we're using it as a way of saying "Yes" you know "... we're in this building because we're ... low cost and we're not worried about swanky office[s]" (SB19:9).

Another director simply said to the same point:

"I think so, yeah. We're not showing that we're, you know, flashing cash around ... and it would be wrong to..." (JC42:9).

Both comments suggest our move was interpreted and represented positively by this cohort, as it reinforced the perception PADA was delivering a scheme cheaply: the building emphasized low cost and aligned it a central characteristic of the organization's identity. As the investment director said:

"I think it says that we're looking after our money ... and I think if we had swanky offices that would send all the wrong signals. I mean as an investor we used to get really worried when companies had big swanky office. Fine they've got to be decent ... but ... [just fit for purpose]" (MF34:19).

Senior participants also suggested that the physical state of the building reflected the temporary nature of the organization: as the fabric of the building was 'work in progress' so this suggested central characteristics of PADA as a time-limited organization. As one of the senior communications team remarked:

"I think it kind of helps people's minds ... coming back to my kind of original point ... [that] PADA isn't here to justify its existence or ... be this corporate entity that's going to kind of sit around for ages, and you know, where in a lot of kind of steady state organizations, you know a lot ((laughingly)) [of] the aim is to be bigger and more ostentatious, because if you're bigger and more ostentatious it must be a kind of success" (WS47:5).

Another said:

"I think ... in part it's a deliberate reflection ... it's not an accident so the sense that you're temporary and you're focused on ... delivering the kind of product and you're not so ... concerned

particularly about making life comfortable for yourself it's about the thing you're going to be producing rather than the...kind of being in a relaxed, happy environment" (SB19:9).

This latter statement is suggestive of this participant's perception of the organization's identity; the impression was that PADA was unconcerned by physical environment and yet was still delivering the scheme in adverse conditions. This notion became an enduring characteristic of the organization: delivery under adversity. Another participant remarked how St. Dunstan's reflected:

"... the spontaneous and evolutionary nature of the programme ... so [St. Dunstan's] does reflect the transience [of PADA] ... you kind of walk in here and you can tell that it's very transient, er, because we've frankly not made much effort ... it reflects ... we're quite spontaneous and to some extent dynamic" (JR16:15).

A final theme was the suggestion that the building's close proximity to future customers of the scheme signified a central and distinctive characteristic of organization, that PADA knew what its customers wanted and could better understand them. As Richard, a senior consultant in the organization, said:

"I'm really quite excited to be in a place that's sort of a hive of human life ... [W]e hear human life going past in Borough High Street. [This says something about] what we're doing here. One concern [I have is] that we keep the member at the heart of everything we're doing, the forefront of our minds. You know ... a significant proportion of the people walking up and down Borough High Street will be Personal Accounts scheme members. You know, so we're ... connected and it's ... really ... that's quite good. So actually there's something here that is sort of more sort of real" (RS31:13).

This statement links the building's location with a central characteristic of the organization, namely that the scheme was targeting low-to-middle earners and that PADA knew what they needed from their pension scheme. In this sense, the comment suggested that the move increased PADA's relevance: by stepping-down the 'office property ladder' the organization 'connected' with those it served. Another senior

participant suggested that working in St. Dunstan's was something to be proud of given how he thought customers would perceive PADA's occupation of the building; he said:

“And ... [Tim], I think he's very proud that his office hasn't even had a lick of paint ... [or has] a big boardroom and shiny furniture. They're all sort of the trappings of, you know, trappings of someone who's kind of complacent and he doesn't want to look like that” (SB19:9).

6.3.3 The ideological function of statements about the move

‘Narratives in organizations ... function as an ideological device to legitimate the meaning systems of dominant groups ... and structure the ... very notion of “organizational practice” for social actors, privileging certain practices over others’ (Mumby 1987, pp.114–118). Using the fourth element of Mumby's (1987) framework – ‘organizational narratives as a means of control’ - this section analyses how identity statements projected senior leaders' understandings of the organization's identity and served to control others' views. Central to my argument is that leaders' narratives promoted their own understandings of what PADA was and sought to silence dissent; in doing so, the cohort legitimized their position in the organization. The section is in two parts: the first discusses how statements made by this cohort controlled other understandings of the organization's identity and the second discusses how senior positions were legitimized.

How statements served ideological agendas

Statements about the move and occupation of St. Dunstan's by the senior cohort promoted their understandings of the organization's identity: the building became a space filled with ‘meanings and presences’ (Kornberger & Clegg 2004, p.1096). I

contend that this understanding served ideologically to control others' perceptions of the organization: 'ideology [operated] as discourse, addressing ... human beings as subjects' (Therborn 1980, p.15). This section discusses how statements were used and constructed to control others' understandings.

The senior cohort consistently articulated statements relating characteristics of St. Dunstan's House with the organization's identity. An alignment between statements about our move and identity-relevant narratives quickly became an accepted view and organizational 'reality' for most participants; this may, in part, have been because no other viable views were promoted (Cobb 1993; Cobb & Rifkin 1991). By establishing a world view of PADA's identity based on characteristics of the move and building, a void was filled which had been created when PADA vacated the DWP accommodation in Holborn. The move created the opportunity for a new identity, distinct from the department, to emerge (Clegg *et al.* 2006; Empson 2004). Additionally, given the consistency and frequency with which the building was mentioned within organizational discourse and interviews, such statements served to provide those outside the senior group with a believable understanding of what PADA was: how and where they were expressed made such statements feel usual within organizational discourse.

The statements about St. Dunstan's House were made in a way which promoted PADA as an organization distinct from others and this, in turn, made recipients feel unique and special. Working for an organization that was different from the rest of the pensions industry (from where many of them had come) and the public sector (from where the rest of employees were recruited) made them feel valued. Similarly,

statements were constructed in such a way that to express alternative or dissenting views was difficult. It would have been hard for others to voice the opinion that being located in a cheap building in the East End of London, surrounded by putatively ‘scruffy’ shops and ‘down at heel’ buildings, gave others the impression that PADA was extravagant with their future members’ money, or that the move away from the DWP did not serve as a symbol for what was distinctive about what PADA was and that it could stand on its own two feet.

While narratives promoted by this group effectively became the main view articulated about this event and subsequently influenced understandings of PADA’s identity, there were dissenting voices in the organization. A small number of participants expressed dissatisfaction with St. Dunstan’s as they felt it sent the wrong message to external stakeholders about the seriousness of PADA’s task and that it was not a good enough working environment for the ‘calibre of people’ employed by it. As one participant, outside the leadership cohort, remarked about St. Dunstan’s:

“... I do think ... it makes quite a difference ... you know, certainly for people who arrive here ... I think where you find yourselves in a physical environment informs your impression of that organization to a fairly large degree. And as well, I suppose, people who just ... happen to know London, when you heard about where PADA is, I guess that also starts to set a particular expectation” (NS26:5).

Another participant described how stakeholders, such as the National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF), viewed the organization, given the accommodation. She said:

“So, for example, Joanne Seeger (a senior stakeholder from the NAFP) said to me “You cannot ... allow your Chief Executive to exist in that horrible, grubby room. It looks dreadful. It does not give out the right signal and people will not take him seriously as a Chief Executive while he exists in accommodation like that. It’s just not good enough”. I started to make noises about us being very new, which at the time we were and about ... being low cost ... we didn’t look extravagant and she accepted all of that and said that the NAPF don’t have brilliant accommodation but frankly there’s a standard that

you need to meet in order to just be taken seriously and in her view we weren't meeting it" (HD14:13).

Such statements were rarely expressed in interviews or openly within organizational discourse. Indeed, dissent about the appropriateness of St. Dunstan's as a suitable office for PADA was an 'organizational taboo' – to suggest it, would have been to state 'black is white'; the senior cohort's understandings of PADA, expressed through narratives about the building, had saturated discourse within the organization.

How senior positions were legitimized

One ideological function of narratives for this cohort was the legitimization of their position in PADA: they served to 'produce, maintain, and reproduce ... power structures' (Mumby 1987, p.114). This was achieved by three mechanisms: statements that differentiated the organization; the use of reflexive narratives; articulating understandings so effectively that no alternative views could be expressed.

In an attempt to produce and maintain their power, the senior cohort sought to legitimize their position by making statements that differentiated the organization in the minds of external stakeholders and to employees. By creating this 'reality' of differentiation, I argue, their strategy was to suggest no other leadership team could replace them – they had created a unique status for PADA. The organization was unlike other pensions provider organizations, such as those that belonged in the "Cheapside offices" over the "other side of the river" (PADA CEO). Additionally, it was distinct from the rest of the public sector, away from the Westminster village. By establishing this putative sense of uniqueness, the message to external stakeholders and employees was that those in power were 'different': they could not be replaced.

Thus, they both legitimized their position and made it difficult for others to argue a case about their continuing suitability in their role; this, in turn, increased their control within the organization.

A further strategy employed was the use of reflexive statements. Most of the senior cohort had been recruited directly from the private sector, people used to working in the City and in the types of organization that would have offices there. The statements used by this cohort to describe this event, I contend, were purposely ‘humble’, they were constructed to be self-deprecating – many of them referred to the expensive type of building PADA could have opted to acquire and described why it had taken a decision not to. Emphasizing the modest costs of the building, on the one hand, while knowing that they had worked in more exclusive districts on the other, made their statements sound more authoritative. The sense projected was that they could have a job wherever they liked, but had opted for the less expensive office as a ‘humble gesture’. This, in turn, suggested they could ‘do it all’ and as they were in control of their own destiny, gave them a right to control PADA’s.

Finally, the senior cohort’s statements served to reproduce the power systems within the organization and the way in which they were expressed made it difficult to construct counter arguments. The statements were ‘sustainable’; they married the key characteristics of the scheme with those of the building. As the scheme needed to be low cost, because of the need to keep costs down to the ‘poorest’ in society, so the statements promoted the idea that PADA took the accommodation because it was inexpensive. This and other arguments ultimately sustained these statements and the power of individuals promulgating them.

Statements made by PADA's senior managers about the organization's move to St. Dunstan's became an important part of the identity discourse within the organization: our offices became a place vested with meanings that strengthened senior manager's control over the organization, constraining those of others.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how '[identity] discourse ... influences individuals' experiences and subjectivity and their ability to think, speak and act' (Clegg *et al.* 2006, p.299). My analysis focused on the identity-relevant statements made about two organizational events. I argued that a senior cohort used statements of these events that promoted their own understandings of PADA's identity to other members of the organization and external stakeholders. This group sought to control and silence alternative understandings, presenting their own as universal to achieve hegemonic ambitions, including the legitimization of their positions (Giddens 1979).

The events described in the chapter were materially different; the industry day occurred over the course of an 8 hour period and was a performance controlled closely by the CEO and his circle to present PADA to an external audience. The move and occupation of St. Dunstan's, in contrast, was an event played out over a longer period and subtly became entwined into identity claims made. However, whilst the features of the events differed, the organizational identity leaders sought to promote through associated statements were similar; what was central, distinctive and enduring about PADA was consistently articulated by this group, but in different contexts. The statements promoted were suggestive of central characteristics of organizational efficiency, low cost but politically important. What was distinctive was the putative

uniqueness of the organization, differing from other pension providers and the public sector. What was enduring was the ‘journey through adversity’ embarked on to deliver the scheme. These messages were entwined with identity statements presented within the performances of the industry day and over time, through narratives about the fabric and location of St. Dunstan’s House.

The content and style in which identity statements were presented during the events, I contend, was a conscious act of control by the CEO cohort: as Clegg *et al.* (2006) argue ‘... power ... discourses are an expression of strategies of control by identifiable actors within a wider historical and institutional interest’ (p301). The events were vehicles that enabled this cohort to control messages about the organization’s identity. This was achieved through the ceremony and stylized nature of the industry day, in which no space was allowed for others’ understandings of PADA to be heard. Over time these became enshrined within the discourse of employees and external stakeholders as expressing opposing views would have signalled denial of the promoted ‘reality’ of PADA. The hegemonic interests of leaders and those closest to the CEO were achieved: rarely were these understandings challenged, rather they etched a ‘blue-print’ for the organization’s identity – both for its present and its history.

CHAPTER 7

MY IDENTITY RELEVANT STORIES OF PADA

... I was beginning to think about organizations as velveteen rabbits, coming to life when they are loved ... I had become aware of several situations which were illuminated for me by thinking about whether there was anyone loving an organization or a part of it to life.

(Sims 2006, p.210)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses my understandings of PADA's identities. I develop different interpretations of what was central, distinctive and enduring about the organization, from my 'lived experience' (Denzin 1995, p.9). As scholars argue, 'being reflexive ... is part of being honest and ethically mature ... that requires researchers to stop being shamans of objectivity' by acknowledging their predilections (Shadlock & Smyth 1998, p.6) (see, also Foley 2002; Giddens 1976; Wacquant 1992). The chapter has three sections. The first explores changes in my understandings of PADA over time; the second analyses my perceptions of the organization's identities through the lens of the relationship with my boss; the final section, before concluding, investigates my understandings of PADA's identities prior to leaving the organization. Data are sourced from the diary³¹ I kept while in the field, which I supplement with interview material and memories (Clifford & Marcus 1986; Sarbin 2004). Vignettes structure the analysis, presenting perceptions, beliefs and attitudes about my understandings of the organization's identities (Hughes 1998) and seek to offer 'vivid portrayal of the conduct of ... event[s] in everyday life' (Erikson 1968, p.149), that is my life, in PADA.

³¹ Diary data are referenced by date, e.g. 01/04/08 refers to material written on 1 April 2008.

7.2 Understandings of PADA's identities over time

This section interprets events captured in my diary for identity-relevant meaning. I analyse how my understandings of PADA's identities changed over the period in which I kept the diary from April 2008 to April 2009 (Gioia *et al.* 2000). The interpretation suggests that the way I narrated my understandings of PADA's identities changed significantly: PADA started as an organization with similar characteristics to those I perceived in other public sector organizations and emerged as an organization with private sector characteristics. As a result, my individual identity narratives changed too; I began, in part, to understand myself with reference to my changing understandings of PADA (Blasi 1988). The section is in three parts, each of which explores understandings at different periods of time.

7.2.1 Period 1: April to May 2008

PADA had existed for a little over six months when I started to write my diary in April 2008. There were only a handful of employees, the rest of us being employed by consultancies, the DWP and other public sector bodies on loan – we were an eclectic group. The organization also moved offices during this period and had spent the previous six months preparing a detailed plan to deliver the pensions scheme. To me, PADA felt new and uncomfortable rather than fresh and innovative. Two central and distinctive features characterized my understandings: firstly, I believed PADA was polarized as it consisted of groups that promoted their putatively salient understandings of the organization's identity over those of others (Humphreys & Brown 2002a; Glynn 2000; Rhodes 2001; Tajfel & Turner 1986); secondly, PADA felt like a secretive organization.

I identified with a group that perceived PADA as a public sector organization, undertaking the delivery of Government policy: for us, the organization was engaged in fulfilling a social need. The other cohort characterized PADA differently: to them, it was a commercial entity, establishing a pension company within a capitalist market. These characterizations often conflicted, both in my mind and interactions with others (Humphreys & Brown 2002a; Jian 2011). Rather than prompting me to reflect on other understandings, conflict served only to entrench my own perceptions of the organization (Skálén 2004). As I noted in my diary on 8 April 2008:

‘Had coffee today with Helen ... and spent 30 minutes talking about how the programme was going ... [W]e talked about other senior managers, (including Simon), [and] both of us kept referring to them as ‘the others’, ‘them’ – not ‘us’ or ‘[our] colleagues’. I wondered [afterwards] why I had spoken to Helen about the matter – it was because she was a civil servant and I identified strongly with this rather than as a PADA secondee’ (08/04/08).

For me, the understanding I held of PADA was the only salient characterization promoted within the organization about its identity. There were views expressed by others, which I denied because they were new and for me not yet coherent as a credible alternative (Cobb 1993). Indeed, while I encountered different opinions that vied with mine, I met these with resistance.

Vignette: May Day bacon butties

Tim arranged for bacon butties to be delivered for a ‘team PADA breakfast’. We were told to congregate outside his office and digest his vision for the organization and the sandwiches simultaneously. I noted in my diary:

‘He made a joke that he had been in a very senior “civil service meeting” where free cakes had been bought from “public money” (unlike these bacon sandwiches, which had been bought from his own ‘private-sector-earned’ money). Tim mused that the public sector was ‘sweet’ and not ‘savoury’. Some people laughed along with him...” (01/05/08).

This comment was a jibe aimed at me and the other public sector people in the room. What Tim meant was – ‘you people from the public sector are naive to think you could have delivered this programme without me and I’ll emphasize this point by suggesting you waste

taxpayer's money'. Its target was to undermine one group in the organization (the established understanding of the organization) and promote other understandings of PADA. I felt alienated, defiant. I wrote at the end of my diary entry: 'After the greasy bacon I went over to Sainsbury and bought a Twix'.

Further reinforcing my understanding of PADA as a public sector organization was that it had no other distinctive features that I could internalize into an alternative narrated identity (Ricoeur 1991). While the organization had a name, email addresses and business cards with logos, I could not develop further defining narratives of the organization, other than that our role was to create the pensions scheme (cf. Olins 1989). This perception was expressed a number of times in my diary, such as the following recollection of a conversation with a fellow civil servant:

'Thinking about [our conversation afterwards] it seemed that being a PADA employee had no definitive meaning for me – the pension scheme did – but not the organization. I think for both of us the organization is merely a diversion ... a great prelude to something else, something to come' (08/04/08).

This was also expressed in the interactions I had with people outside the organization. I recorded an episode in my diary when I was interviewing potential consultants to join my team. During this I focused on the urgency I felt about the scheme, rather than the candidates' ability to fit within PADA and competently do the role. I recorded:

'I even said to one consultancy that I wanted them to share the urgency of personal accounts – that people were not saving enough and that their role was critical to solving this problem. Even Adrian and Andy who were interviewing with me looked shocked at my outburst – I felt moral and superior. I travelled home feeling content' (08/05/08).

A further characteristic of PADA was that it was a secretive organization. It was during this period that external people were appointed to roles in the organization without due process, brokered behind closed doors, with no clarity about what the job was or why it was being created. This felt uncomfortable for me as this behaviour

conflicted with my understanding of PADA as a public sector organization which demanded transparency in recruitment. Also, of course, it was disconcerting because I was not able to influence these decisions: I felt my power within PADA was being eroded. As I wrote on 8 May 2008:

‘Later ... I met up with Adrian ... I outlined why I felt worried about the programme and in particular that nobody seemed in charge of the phase that we were in. He agreed and said that this was being dealt with and that somebody had been identified to lead the phase to MPRG (an external review of the programme). It was clear that he would take that role forward – but he wasn’t going to say that to me. I wondered why – who had given him this role? Simon and Tim surely. I wondered why so much was going on that I didn’t know about. It made me feel less associated with PADA – I felt alienated by the secrecy’ (08/05/08).

My understanding of PADA as a secretive organization, in turn, bred resistance to those I perceived were creating this environment and seemingly insignificant events became opportunities to disrupt others’ efforts to assert different understandings of the organization (Clegg 1989). As I recorded in my diary on 16 June 2008:

‘I travelled to London today for various meetings. By far the most frustrating and interesting was the programme management meeting in the afternoon. The chair, Julian, was late although his ‘mute sidekick’ (as we called him), Mark, was there. [Some of us] had some fun at Julian’s expense [in his absence]. We joked about our highlight report and said that we all felt on track – so we didn’t need a meeting. Each of us went around in turn and quickly said ‘I’m on track’, ‘I’m on track’, ‘I’m on track’. For some reason we thought it very funny indeed’ (16/06/08).

Whilst, on reflection, this was a juvenile act, it was an attempt to undermine and resist others’ understandings of PADA as an organized, planned and efficient organization (Rhodes 2000).

7.2.2 Period 2: June to October 2008

Entries in my diary suggest my understandings of PADA changed during this period: I evolved different conceptions of PADA's identities. In many of my diary entries I began to care about the organization and felt it valuable to my career. Additionally, distinctive characteristics began to emerge in my mind, as did diary reports about how important the organization was to the delivery of the scheme, as opposed to previous understandings that suggested the policy was critical to this endeavour.

Throughout the period there were entries in my diary that suggested I began to form an emotional attachment to the organization (Fineman 2004; Sims 2006) through my identification with others' understandings (Ashforth & Mael 1989; Foreman & Whetten 2002); this in turn influenced my own understandings. On 24 June 2008 I recorded how my boss, Simon, and I had visited the Treasury to request further resources to run the programme. I recalled how Simon had made an impassioned speech about the need for more resources, given the importance of the task. I noted how I followed this with an equally emotional plea, I wrote:

‘After his ‘speech’ I chipped in by saying what was most valuable for me joining PADA was the learning I got from working with people from the private sector. For a moment I believed this – that what was central for me about PADA was the value in the diversity of people within it. On reflection now – I wish I hadn’t got so emotional about it – after all we were in the Treasury canteen!’
(24/06/08).

In this story, I told another civil servant about the value PADA offered my career; it was an episode that demonstrated I was beginning to identify with the organization by articulating my perceived understandings of its distinctive characteristics as a learning environment. This served an additional purpose, of course: by siding with my boss, I

was 'toeing the party line' by publicly accepting his understandings of the organization. As Humphreys and Brown (2002a) remark, 'dominant groups produce shared meanings and understandings' (p.423). I made other comments in my diary that supported this. I recorded:

'Not much to report today. Although, importantly, for the first time while working at home I felt as if I was starting to think primarily as a PADA employee rather than as a secondee from the department. It is hard to explain but has something to do with wanting my future to be more with PADA than the department. What is strange is that I don't really feel comfortable in PADA – where it is heading, its role – what it has to do' (23/06/08).

This statement also suggests changes in my understandings of PADA; the organization was no longer merely a name with which I was associated, but one I felt I belonged to and identified with (Dutton *et al.* 1994). It was also during this period that I felt discourse within the organization about its identity began to feel more homogeneous; it became more unitary, in my mind (Fairhurst & Putnam 2004). Key to reaching this understanding was that I was clearer about my role and key tasks in the organization and therefore my understanding of the PADA became more cogent; I felt less threatened about the security of my own role, and therefore more able to engage with others' differing views. This was suggested in an entry in July, referring to a stand-up session I attended chaired by Tim. I noted:

'Another interesting thing was that he mentioned at least twice in his 20 minute talk that PADA was merely a transient organization and that its job was to replace itself with a Trustee Corporation. It seemed to me that PADA wasn't transient – it had a job to do now and over the next three years – but Tim mentioned this a number of times. What seemed an enduring characteristic of PADA was that it was always in transition – between PADA and the Trustee Corporation' (02/07/08).

Throughout this period rumours spread that the project might be closed due to changes in ministerial priorities. One such occasion was 8 October 2008 when gossip was rife that the DWP was considering closing the project. I noted:

‘It felt strange that my ‘world’ in PADA could just end as a result of a corridor conversation between some very senior individuals within the department to whom this project was just another project. Of course, to me, it wasn’t just another project – it was my life to a great extent – the policy of personal accounts was something that I believed in – cared about – felt was important – and yet was just another project to others. The conversation made me realize how important PADA had become to my life – it wasn’t just a job – it was my way of life – long days in London – thoughts over the weekend. It was core to my identity now’ (08/10/08).

It was through my identification with the organization that I began to understand it differently. It felt less important whether it was either a public or private sector company – more important was what it offered my career. Additionally, I began to believe that the organization, rather than the political rhetoric, was the most important element in delivery of the scheme.

7.2.3 Period 3: November 2008 to April 2009

PADA’s status and workload changed significantly during this period. In November 2008 the Government gained Royal Assent for the second Pensions Bill (HMG 2008a) that gave additional powers to PADA to deliver the pensions scheme; pertinently, for me, this empowered the organization to commence the procurement exercise. It also signalled that PADA was an ‘arm’s length’ body from the department rather than under its direct dependence. Royal Assent, in many ways, was PADA’s ‘real’ birthday.

The day of Royal Assent itself was not particularly significant. I recall hearing someone say in a ‘corridor conversation’ that the Bill had become an Act, but this

was not a surprise to me given its passage through the Houses of Parliament. Rather, it was some time after this event that my understandings of PADA began to change as a result of it. Possibly the first indication of this was noted in my diary on 3 November 2008, when I recorded:

‘I took Adrian (a trusted consultant on my team), Andy and Tracey to the Cinnamon Club just off Westminster. It’s a very nice place serving a traditional type of Indian food. I was paying myself and it was essentially to celebrate Adrian’s 50th birthday. For me it signalled a sort of arrival at senior management – I mean I was taking out my senior managers ... and [this] felt comfortable ... [I]t was also a sign of power, of course, and almost a liberating feeling of being more in the private sector than the public sector. Perhaps I was changing too given PADA’s new role as an executive authority had just been made possible by the passing of the Bill’ (03/12/08).

For me, this story suggests how PADA’s new status, in view of the Act, changed my understanding of the organization; central to the organization was that it allowed me far greater freedom than if I had been in the civil service. As PADA had come of age with Royal Assent, so had I. Soon after the meal, on 8 December 2008, PADA had its Christmas away day, billed as its ‘official’ birthday party. This was held in Church House (the same building in which PADA later held the industry day that I discussed in chapter 6). I noted in my diary that both the location and the agenda of the event impacted my changing understanding of the organization. I recorded that this was the first event to which PADA had not invited people from the department. This event was its own and ‘not tainted by the department’ (08/12/08). I noted:

‘...it was a good event – well balanced I thought and kept my interest. PADA was an organization now – it had a few corporate stories to rest on – getting through phase 1 – an Act of Parliament which PADA had helped to defend – a plan, and a set of documents which a review group believed were good enough to go to procurement with and an event to call its own. It was a proud day!’ (08/12/08).

For me, PADA came of age that day, reaching a level of maturity as an organization, independent from others. This was a markedly different understanding from that I had six months before this event.

During this period the procurement exercise commenced. I had been waiting to start the competition for a long time and ‘firing the starting gun’ was an important milestone of my work in PADA. A central feature for me about PADA during this time was that it was on its way to achieving something tangible; it was no longer merely ‘political’ but playing ‘high stakes’ with contracts worth millions of pounds.

Later in March I recorded in my diary:

‘I was asked to attend the management team meeting today to inform them of the results of the procurement exercise to date ... Tim and Simon were listening intently though and seemed pleased with the results – their organizations were in play – good news from their point of view – all to plan, I thought they must be thinking. At the end of the session Tim said something that rather surprised me – he gave ... my team praise for all the hard work and dedication that was being put into the process’ (04/03/09).

I recall these words specifically as rarely did Tim give such high praise. It gave me an added sense of purpose about my task: as PADA valued me, so I valued it (Brown 1997; McAllister & Bigley 2002). Aligned to this, I began to consider the rest of what the organization was doing more favourably. My sense of self was changing with the commencement of the procurement. This is articulated in the diary entry of 11 March where I noted that an old university friend had rung me suggesting we meet up for a drink:

‘...he talked about what he does now and seemed to be doing well! He asked me what I do for work and I started with the usual “oh-well-it’s-all-very-boring-really-line”. But as I was saying that, I couldn’t quite keep it ... – not sure it was because I didn’t believe or feel it anymore or that I didn’t want to seem unsuccessful. Was I unsuccessful? I would be the last person to know’ (11/03/09).

For me, I didn't feel unsuccessful given what I had achieved in PADA. I felt successful and confident. Over the year, my understanding of PADA had changed significantly; the polarized groups, I described in the first sub-section, faded in significance and due to the 'subtle web of power relationships' (Humphreys & Brown 2002a, p.423) within the organization, my understandings suggested greater alignment with the group which I had first opposed.

7.3 Understandings of PADA's identities through stories involving my boss

Stories about my relationship with Simon, my boss, provide a lens for other interpretations of my understandings of PADA's identities. Of 201 entries in my diary, 25 relate to this relationship, representing events that influenced my understandings of PADA. In Chapter 4, I described how Simon joined PADA as a consultant first and after open competition, became the director of business delivery. As head of procurement, I reported into his directorate. Given that, prior to his arrival, I reported to the head of the programme, his recruitment diminished my sense of accountability. Our relationship was often turbulent, with regular arguments and clashes and my sense that he was disappointed with my work activity (Clancy *et al.* 2011)³². Over time, however, I believe we both learnt to reconcile differences constructively, if not always amicably, and our working relationship ended, when I left PADA, with mutual respect. The following analysis is divided into two sections; both describe events that influenced my understandings of PADA. The first explores incidents where I sought to resist Simon's understandings of the organization's identity; the second explores those where I accepted them. The interpretation overall

³² I should note that I would characterize my relationship with Simon as invariably professional. On reflection, I learnt a lot from him and have enduring memories of the value he added to the delivery of the procurement exercise. It is clear that Simon made a huge contribution to the expected success of the scheme and the creation of the infrastructure to create it. We are now friends.

suggests the fragility of my understanding of PADA, given the extent to which it was influenced by this relationship.

7.3.1 Stories of resistance

Barbalet (1985) defined resistance as the ‘efficacious influence of those subordinate to power’ (p.542) and argued that it is implicit in episodic agency power; resistance and power stand in relationship to each other (Clegg 1989; Fleming & Spicer 2008; Ford *et al.* 2002; cf. Mumby 2005). My stories suggest I believed Simon sought to promote his understanding of PADA’s identity which I resisted by projecting my own. As Clegg *et al.* (2006) argue, ‘when there is resistance to the power relations inscribed in the authorities’ views of the world, then what makes it possible are alternative ... conversations about the nature of [authorities’] rationality’ (pp.130–131). My analysis of two vignettes explores how I resisted his understanding and projected my own about what was fundamental, uniquely descriptive and persistent about PADA (Humphreys & Brown 2002a).

Vignette: With whom to side

It is a legal requirement of public sector procurement to release a Prior Information Notice (PIN). This pre-warns suppliers of a contracting opportunity and highlights which Government department is letting the contract. This is valuable information for suppliers as it tells them who controls the award of the contract. The programme released a PIN in July 2008, but prior to this debate raged over which organization should release it. Tim and Simon wanted it to be PADA; the DWP wanted it to be the DWP: I ended up in the crossfire.

As I recorded in my diary:

‘It had been a difficult day. I had a meeting with Caroline (a senior DWP official) in the morning. We talked through my proposals for managing the PIN process for the procurement’ (13/05/08).

During the meeting I said PADA would release the PIN, as I had agreed with Simon beforehand. Caroline had disagreed strongly – this had taken me by surprise and given her seniority, I capitulated and changed my mind. At the time, I knew this would be received badly by Simon. On returning to PADA and recounting the skirmish with Caroline, Simon

went mad with rage. As I wrote later that evening:

‘He was annoyed that the DWP and I were trying to deny PADA’s ability to make decisions – the PIN seemed to be just the straw that broke the camel’s back on issues that were wider ’ (13/05/08).

We had an intense ‘stand-up’ argument about why I had changed my mind. During this, he questioned where my loyalties lay – with PADA or the DWP – he implied that I should work wherever my answer to this led. After the incident we didn’t speak properly for some time.

Analysis of the vignette

As with all stories, this vignette can be interpreted in multiple ways (Barthes 1977; Boje 1995). One interpretation is that it reflects conflicts of understandings about PADA’s status: was it autonomous or subservient to the DWP, or, in other words, was a central characteristic of the organization its ability to determine its own future? Fundamental to Simon’s understanding was PADA as an emerging, independent financial services organization – a new pensions provider in a commercial market, an entity that would be profitable or not and therefore free to make decisions about how it operated and organized. As he remarked during his interview:

“...we are effectively creating ... a one product financial services product company which is broadly structured on traditional lines ... we make our own decisions about what the characteristics of that financial services product should be” (SR23:11).

In contrast, the DWP regarded PADA as its dependent and created it as a Non-Departmental Public Body – a ‘Quango’ (Bertelli 2006). The DWP provided PADA with funds and made legislation that brought it into existence. Consequently, the DWP believed key decisions about the programme should be made by it or at least in consultation. My understanding of PADA reconciled both views. The organization was distinct from and yet dependent on the DWP and was a new pensions business under Government sponsorship. However, the incident suggests the fragility of these pluralistic understandings of PADA (Glynn *et al.* 2000; Halbesleben *et al.* 2007).

How could I understand PADA in a way that conflated others' different opinions and yet, under pressure, side so decisively with the DWP? Prior to meeting Caroline in the DWP, I had agreed with Simon that PADA would release the PIN – he had been firm on this instruction. This aligned with his rationale for the organization as autonomous, with the right to enter into contracts with suppliers. Changing my mind when I encountered pushback from the DWP was conscious resistance to Simon's understandings of the organization as I knew this would result in a difficult conversation on my return to PADA. Indeed, after the argument with Simon I felt ostracized, removed from the 'inner circle'. While my internal soliloquy of fundamental and distinctive characteristics of the organization had melded others' competing understandings, when pressure was applied by both, I opted to accept one and resist another. Of course, one interpretation of this is my obedience to the seniority of a fellow civil servant, but another is that this was an opportunity to challenge Simon's definition of PADA and his authority over me. I could assert my own understanding as an alternative identity with impunity (Elsbach & Bhattacharya 1998; Rhodes 2000).

The PIN was eventually released jointly by the DWP and PADA: a compromise reached in which both organizations' names were in the notice. In the overall procurement exercise the incident was of little consequence but its significance, to me, was that it highlighted the instability of my understanding of PADA (Chreim 2005; Daskalaki 2010; Gioia *et al.* 2000; Scott & Lane 2000b; Sillince & Brown 2009). This story, as with the next, demonstrates circumstances in which power was asserted and my understanding of PADA's identity changed and became itself a mechanism through which I sought to resist others.

Vignette: Discussing resources with Simon

Simon and I often discussed how I resourced my team. He was keen to influence decisions about whom I recruited; one occasion was 25 November 2008. I wrote later that evening in my diary:

‘[I] had a session this evening with Simon about resources for the team. As usual we went through the entire organization chart in ... detail and a meeting which was due to end within an hour went on for three! It was clear ... Simon had an agenda with both [the] roles [we were discussing in particular] – first he mentioned Adrian ... for [one] role (and it subsequently turned out that ... [he] had already spoken to Adrian about the role). He also [had spoken to] someone else for the supplier facing role – another one of his friends from the past’ (25/11/08).

Simon often sought out people he had worked with before to bring into the organization and this had become a bone of contention with some of us. At the end of the session, he said something that further soured our meeting. As I recorded:

‘...he said to me ... he wanted a conversation, at some point, about what I thought about him ... bringing ... his friends into the organization’ (25/11/08).

He also wanted to know what other people in the organization were saying about this issue to me. I replied:

‘I would be happy to give my opinion on what I thought about him doing this, but I could not give an opinion about what others thought of this’ (25/11/08).

At this point (according to my diary) he got ‘quite confrontational’, saying I should be ‘able’ to do this and that he ‘expected’ it (25/11/08).

This topic came up again – but I was adamant with him that I wasn’t going to say what others had said to me, either in interviews conducted for this thesis or in work-related conversations.

Analysis of this vignette

This story can be interpreted as an exercise in workplace obedience in which power dynamics in our relationship are more overtly observable than in the first vignette (Hutchinson *et al.* 2006). As Witten (1993) argues, narratives in organizations ‘play a role in creating and maintaining a culture of obedience ... [and are] a potent vehicle for channeling thought and action’ (p.113). I read this incident as Simon asserting power within our relationship and my resistance to his request to tell him what others had said as a way of promoting my own understandings.

Simon's approach to recruitment had been of recurring interest within the organization and to some, remained a concern. Indeed *Private Eye* ran a two-part story about it³³, leaked – it had been assumed – by a member of staff. While the practice of 'word of mouth recruitment' (van Hove & Lievens 2009) and 'shoulder tapping' is widespread in corporations, in the public sector it is rarely, in my experience, done overtly: indeed, it is taboo. Simon's desire to discuss resources with me was, of course, an understandable and appropriate mechanism of control, an instance of my boss ensuring I recruited sensibly. On another level, however, I read it as a way in which he sought to promote his understanding of PADA's identity. Recruiting people that he knew and had worked with successfully before was a way of securing his conception of PADA developed over time. Since those around him were similar in background, they would understand the organization in similar ways.

My resistance to Simon's request to tell him what others were saying was for two reasons. Fundamental to PADA, I wanted to believe, was its integrity and reputation with its future customers: pension stakeholders and Government sponsors. Hence, a story implying 'jobs for the boys' could only damage PADA's reputation and my own (Dutton & Dukerich 1991). This was amplified as it was a taboo subject in the DWP,

³³ See *Private Eye* editions 1254 (25 January 2010) and 1256 (19 February 2010). The reporter wrote:

'More on the old mates' club that is the Personal Accounts Delivery Authority (PADA). ...[T]he authority's choice of investment director, Mark..., is an interesting one, to say the least, given his background in the volatile world of hedge funds... How fortunate that the top Government investment job should immediately crop up. And how coincidental, the *Eye* can reveal, that Fawcett was a close friend, indeed had been the best man, of one Simon..., the pension authority's £207,000-a-year "business delivery director" and right hand man of chief executive Tim Jones. As revealed in *Eye* 1254, this isn't the only friendly connection in the well-fashioned Nest. [Simon] himself brought in by Jones after they worked together at a company called Simpax while [Simon] also brought in a number of his former colleagues, including Nick..., from the consulting firm he subsequently ran, Alpheus Consulting. Now it emerges that yet another Alpheus man, Adrian..., has been on the books ... [all of] which makes PADA uniquely secretive as well as uniquely clubby' (p.29).

by which I was still technically employed. Secondly, not telling him what others were saying was a way of promoting my understanding of PADA over his: it gave me the opportunity to act as if I were ‘superior’. Given that I believed it would be impossible for him to complain to Tim or his peers about my disobedience, I could take the moral high ground and, as I read it, leave my own understanding of PADA more firmly embedded in our relationship.

7.3.2 Stories of acceptance

This section explores stories where I seemed to accept Simon’s understandings of PADA’s identity: his understandings replaced mine in my mind. My interpretation suggests there were episodes where I accepted his conception of the organization because this was the easiest course of action to take and other times when I believed my understanding was changing, given his influence. The following section is in two parts: episodes where I accepted Simon’s view because it was easiest and also where my understandings changed because of the power exerted within the relationship. In both sections I seek to expose the effect the confluence of my understanding with Simon’s had on my own individual sense of identity (Elsbach & Bhattacharya 1998).

Acceptance because it was easiest

Vignette: My appraisal

Many companies run an appraisal system for their employees: PADA was no exception. My first with Simon took place on 23 May 2008. Of course, I’ve had many such meetings (as well as conducting my own with staff), but these hadn’t prepared me for the one with Simon!

Scene: Simon’s office, mid-afternoon; sun (hot) streamed through the window.

We sat at his ‘meeting table’ in his office – next to each other on one side of the table. Simon opened his laptop to find his ‘notes’. I wrote in my diary a couple of days later:

‘He had [obviously] really prepared – I had not – although I didn’t feel unprepared. What was strange was that actually he was in control – he kept

his computer screen to himself – so I couldn't see what he had written. He read it faithfully, I think, but I could not be sure' (23/05/08).

As appraisals go, it was pretty positive to begin with – there were the things I had done well: he was pleased. And then, which again felt quite normal, were things he was less certain about. As I wrote:

'This centred primarily on the lack of trust between us – essentially him not trusting me (albeit that he didn't say this overtly) – the problem was I was a civil servant – somebody different. He said on a number of occasions that PADA needed to be an organization 'not of the civil service but itself' (23/05/08).

Indeed, he repeated this statement, like a mantra, at least four times, I mentally recorded. I wanted to question, challenge, simply understand what he meant, 'but thought, what is the point?' (23/05/08). However, at the end of the meeting I remember saying distinctly to him: "I [am] 100% behind you [and Tim]". I wrote in my diary: 'I think I may have meant [this]' (23/05/08). I also remember thinking I wanted the session to end as quickly as possible.

I read this episode as an exercise in power: understandings of PADA's identities were the ground upon which this conflict was fought (Dixon 2007; Foucault 1980; Jermier *et al.* 1994). During the appraisal, Simon's understanding of PADA and my acceptance of it were realized. Power was exercised through two mechanisms: firstly, Simon controlled the meeting – writing a prepared brief that was read to me but left unseen and, secondly, highlighting his perceived lack of trust in our relationship on the basis of my status as a civil servant. This latter comment, in particular, I suggest, reflected the inherent difference between our understandings of PADA. For Simon, PADA was an organization, 'not of the civil service but itself' (23/05/08): this aligned with his understanding of PADA as an independent organization from Government and master of its own destiny. Simon's understandings of PADA opposed mine. As I noted in my diary, my instinct was to challenge this, to resist Simon's understanding of the organization and promote mine with more salience (Fleming & Spicer 2007). But while this was in my mind, it was not what I said. Instead, I accepted this understanding by stating I was fully behind him and Tim. An interpretation of this was that I wanted to show I genuinely supported Simon – to get him to trust me so

that this negative comment would not arise again and so that I would become part of the dominant senior group. A further interpretation was that it was the easiest comment to make. It meant signalling I was accepting this understanding of PADA because this was the quickest way of being released from the meeting. The entire session had made me feel anxious and question my understanding of myself. Until this point I had felt assured that my sense of self and my understanding of PADA were aligned: I legitimized my conception of PADA by reference to my values (Brown 1997).

Acceptance because I believed it

This section highlights events where my diary entries suggested I accepted Simon's understanding of PADA because of the power exercised within our relationship and where, on reflection, my understanding changed. The first vignette below describes an incident where I felt I was narrating to others in a way Simon spoke to me. The contents of these statements were identity-relevant as they suggested how I should deal with a staffing issue in a way I believed Simon would have dealt with it, namely as a private sector employee would handle these issues. The second vignette is similarly suggestive of how I interpreted actions by Simon as mechanisms of control through which he sought to promote his unitary understanding over mine. Simon's deployment of control, in turn, impacted upon my understanding of PADA's identity.

Vignette: Being like Simon

Simon proposed that in addition to my responsibilities for procurement, my team should lead the production of the specification for the contract (a complex technical document). I felt 'flattered', daunted. My diary entry for 18 June 2008 describes the discussion I had with my direct subordinates, Andy and Tracey, to get their advice. I wrote:

'I said to both [of them] that I would then be looking for one of them to manage the work. I said, slyly, that I didn't want Andy to do this – but left

it in the air that I wanted Tracey to do it. I knew she felt uncomfortable about it, but ... didn't say a word – I just left it hanging. On reflection, this felt the wrong thing to do – it was a Simon thing to do – it was not my style of operating. Was I trying to be like Simon? There were times during the conversation that I felt like I was using his language and mannerisms' (18/06/08).

The following day I wrote again about the same topic Simon and I had held earlier that day, I wrote:

'It felt odd – and that he was trying to control me more and more. And more and more I feel like I am beginning to believe him' (19/06/08).

Vignette: Simon becoming emotional

By the beginning of 2009 PADA was on 'tenterhooks': we were days away from starting the procurement. Everyone was busy, working long hours, stressed. Just after the New Year bank holiday, I spent a day with Simon, working through a document we needed for the procurement: a six hour session. At the end of it we were both exhausted. I wrote in my diary later that evening that at the end of the meeting Simon said:

'... this thing (by which I think he meant personal accounts) has more chance of failing than it has succeeding – but my role is to give it my best shot' (06/01/09).

While he was talking his eyes 'welled up' and he started to cry. I couldn't work out whether I thought he was being sincere or not. I changed the subject quickly (to save 'his face' rather than my embarrassment).

On reflection, this felt like I was being 'stage managed': it worked; I felt from that point on I would do almost anything he asked of me.

Both vignettes suggest that as a consequence of my evolving relationship with Simon, my understanding of PADA's identities began to change. I interpret both incidents as exercises in power that I made no attempt to resist. By this stage the organization had changed from one emerging from the DWP, which I had had a hand in creating and controlled, to an organization that controlled me; my relationship with Simon was one lens through which I now recognize this change. PADA had changed in my mind from an organization characterized by its dependency on the Government to one of independence. This left me increasingly unsure of what I thought was fundamental,

uniquely descriptive and persistent about PADA. This void, I argue, was increasingly filled by Simon's understandings of the organization.

7.4 My understandings of PADA's identities on leaving the organization

The following section tells a story of my understandings of PADA's identities at the time I left: as Boje *et al.* (1997) argue, 'storytelling is a powerful way for executives ... to challenge the old story of their organization with a new story' (p.631). My story is told in three interlinked sub-sections, each consisting of a vignette and analysis of its identity-relevant meanings. The story centres on a presentation I gave to 70 members of PADA on 27 April 2010, just a few days before I left the organization. I had been asked to speak by Helen, at her Directorate's away day, about my reflections of working in PADA and offer advice for future success. In the week leading up to the event my diary had been hectic and the day before the presentation I still had not developed material. Given this, I experimented with a different presenting style: instead of PowerPoint slides, with rows of bullet point text, I presented twelve pictures and photographs (see Appendix 6). My narratives accompanying these slides were divided into three sections, sub-titled (i) what motivated me to work in PADA, (ii) why I believed PADA was special, and (iii) my advice to the organization on my departure. The session was held away from St. Dunstan's House on HMS Belfast, a decommissioned warship on the south bank of the Thames, London, which functioned as a museum and venue for corporate functions. The Ship's Company Dining Hall accommodated the event.

7.4.1 What motivated me to work in PADA

Vignette: Working for PADA (Part I)

1.40 p.m.: Arrived on board HMS Belfast. Navy officers patrolling the deck bade me “Good afternoon, Sir”. I felt superior.

(I don’t know why, but giving a presentation when I’m not a member of the event’s audience makes me feel important too – presidential. This presentation felt strange though: I was saying goodbye. While departing PADA was my decision, I felt sad and anxious about the loss of an organization that had become my velveteen rabbit).

After a series of corridors I found the Ship’s Company Dining Hall and peered through the porthole. The ‘hall’ wasn’t grand as its name implied. It had a low ceiling and was altogether oddly proportioned – around 200 long by 25 feet wide. The walls (unadorned with pictures of nobility and military heroes, as halls are supposed to be), were, as the rest of the ship, constructed from steel plate, which made voices echo, like a Victorian swimming pool. Eight or so tables filled the room, comfortably accommodating the team. Helen’s aide greeted me – whispering in my ear that they were running over, but that I would speak in 20 minutes. I began to feel nervous and mused over my first three slides – ‘what drove me to work in PADA’. I had chosen three images to aid what I had to say: an elderly woman, a two-by-two management matrix and a cup of tea. I had talked about these before; indeed, my narrative accompanying these images was part of my regular thoughts of PADA. The time came to speak:

Slide 1: a picture of my Great Aunt Vera. (Laughs from the audience, as a slide of an elderly woman appeared).

“So what drove me to work in PADA?” I asked.

“This is my Aunt Vera, who died recently at ninety nine, just a few days before her telegram ... she left school at fifteen and worked continuously in low-skilled administrative jobs until she was in her 80s ... [pause] ... in all this time no employer provided her with a workplace pension and she retired, relying solely on the State...”

[I changed the tone of my voice, at this point, and (as it were) squarely faced the imaginary TV camera ahead and rhetorically challenged my audience...]:

“How can this be right? My employer provides me with a pension, yours too (I pointed to the audience), as well as for those over there (I was pointing now across the river to the City and added a socialist sentiment to my voice).

... [pause for drama] ...

“It can’t be the case that millions of people benefit from an employer pension when millions of low paid workers don’t – this is simply not fair. PADA’s work fundamentally addresses this wrong.”

I felt really presidential – politically relevant now – and flipped to the next slide.

Slide 2: a two-by-two management matrix (quadrant ‘Urgent and Important’ highlighted).

“I remember when PADA was first set up, its chairman, now Lord Myners, asked to meet his new management team.”

I described my first one-to-one meeting with this highly-respected former investment banker as uneventful and uninspiring until I was leaving his office and he stood up to open the door for me. Putting his hand firmly on my shoulder, he said:

“Never forget, Matt, what we are doing here is important and mission critical – a once in a generation opportunity...” (Hush fell on HMS Belfast.)

I moved to the next slide (slide 3): a picture of a cup of tea (audience relieved ... anxiety of the morality and emotions of the preceding slides dissipated).

“For a time, a consultant named Julian worked here ... some of you will remember...” (Tongue now in my cheek – as I knew this directorate of PADA didn’t ‘rate’ Julian – I played it for a laugh and it worked).

“I recall him saying *something* of value ... how our pension scheme should feel for our future customers, he said: ‘It should be like a cup of tea – what ‘Brits’ turn to first, trusted, valued ... universal...”

I concluded this section by saying how I kept this metaphor in mind in my work at PADA. (With more dramatic pause) I changed to the next slide...

An interpretation of the identity-relevant meaning of vignette (Part I)

This section offers interpretations of my understandings of PADA highlighted by this vignette. I developed the organizational identity-relevant narratives of the elderly woman, my meeting with PADA’s first chairman and the cup of tea years before this presentation and often used them in my internalized soliloquy about PADA (Athens 1994). Indeed, I used these images at one of my own team away days, a couple of years before this event, with the same narrative and sequence. As I noted in my diary:

‘We had our Commercial Team away day today. I started with a few slides on what ‘drove me to work’ each day and to work for personal accounts. I started with a slide with three vignettes ... all these were true to some extent although embellished in the telling’ (30/04/08).

The narratives underpinning these images served me with an enduring understanding (albeit one that I did not always promote) of what was central about PADA. This remained constant throughout my work in the organization; but it felt more important to articulate it now that I was leaving. The narratives accompanying these images aligned to the fundamental characteristics I valued most about myself: the central characteristics I promoted to this audience about PADA were those I wanted others to

associate with me. That noted, however, my narratives accompanying these slides were often edited (Dunne 1995) as I only ever used these stories with audiences with whom I thought they would ‘play well’. I never gave this presentation to directorates in PADA I neither directly influenced (like my own) or those consisting mainly of former private sector employees. This would have meant describing my thoughts of PADA’s identity to audiences I perceived would not understand them: this was impression management (Goffman 1959b). It also mitigated the risk of conflict from audiences with different underlying perceptions of PADA’s fundamental characteristics.

One interpretation of my understandings of PADA’s central characteristics is told through these images. They set centre stage my understanding of the organization as enabling retirement saving for low/middle income earners, within the context of ‘social justice’: PADA facilitating societal change through its activities. The statements I made in the presentation do not remark upon PADA’s legislative role to create the technical platform for saving, but emphasize a non-legislative aspiration for justice: PADA rectifying an inherent wrong in society. This is suggested in the story of Vera and the narrative of her low paid employment and absence of work-place pension provision; while true in part, my story adds emotional commitment, given the family connection. PADA characterized from the perspective of the social justice I believed its work was about sought to underline my understanding of the political importance of the organization. My narrative turned a team ‘pep’ talk into an overtly political statement. With the general election of 2010 just days away, it was improper for a civil servant to speak with political bias. My story of the meeting with PADA’s first chairman also highlighted political bias. While the Chair was, as I reminded the

audience, a respected investment banker he was also a senior political figure within the Labour Administration, who had, infamously, remarked on BBC1's *Question Time* that David Cameron was a "superior young toff" and lacked a work ethic³⁴. Incorporating the Chair into my narrative was a political point about PADA's identity, aligning it with the Government and promoting its left-wing birth (the Chair was a political appointee recruited to make the pensions scheme a reality). Additionally, I was seeking to legitimize and secure PADA's future on both sides of the political divide, apparent from the way in which I overtly mentioned the Chair's reputation as a business leader – generally perceived as a 'Tory attribute'.

Why did I need to emphasize PADA's central characteristic as an instigator of social justice? This was because my understanding of PADA's identity was entwined with my own. As my self-esteem was gained from the organization in which I worked (Brown and Starkey 2000), so I needed to align important identity characteristics I perceived about myself to those I could identify within the organization I worked. By making PADA's central characteristics those concerned with social justice, I was referring to my philanthropic character, projecting my desire to work in an organization making a difference (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978). It was also due to narcissism (Brown 1997); the promotion of such characteristics to others in PADA, who I knew would receive them well, was a promotion of myself. Projecting what was important about me was a ploy to preserve my understanding of others' perceptions of me in PADA. As Scott and Lane (2000a) remark, organizational

³⁴ BBC 1 *Question Time*, 29 November 2007. *The Guardian* (6 December 2007) remarked: 'The Conservatives threatened to withdraw support for the Government's pension plans after an attack on David Cameron by the chairman of the body charged with implementing the new retirement scheme. Tories called for Paul Myners ... to be sacked ... when he called accused Cameron of being a "superior young toff" whose only job outside politics was to work at a TV company that lost billions'.

identities are narrated ‘by managers ... who are simultaneously engaged in the construction of their individual identities’ (p.44).

7.4.2 Why PADA was special

Vignette: Working for PADA (Part II)

...the next slide was projected.

“The following three slides describe why I believe PADA is special.”

Slide 4: Buddha (enlightened). I drew attention to his state for the audience, all of whom (rather comically) stared more intently at the image.

“For me, PADA is an enlightened organization,” I professed.

“In my experience, it is unique in a major Government programme that policy (the creation of ideas) and implementation (the delivery of these ideas) have worked together so tightly as here ... and that’s one reason why the organization has been so successful and is so special...”

I caught Helen’s eye: she was glowing and nodding sagely in agreement. As she was the acknowledged architect of this joint working, I felt I’d landed a great point.

I moved to the next slide (slide 5) – a picture of the plan. (I turned to the projected image and thought ‘why show this photo?’ It felt incongruous to the other messages. Then I remembered that for PADA its plans were integral to how it worked: ‘if it wasn’t on the plan it didn’t exist’. Planning had been a painful experience for the organization when it was first created, a significant level of resistance mounting between those who thought it the most valuable element of the programme and those who considered it a mere enabler. I was in the latter camp; Simon, however led the former camp).

“Plans,” I said (making it up as I went), “...plans have been critical to the success of our organization and their deployment was my ‘Road to Damascus’ moment here. PADA is special because of the level of detail in which it has developed its plans ... for us, our success and uniqueness is a direct result of this – and that’s to the credit of those people leading this stand.”

I felt I was losing my audience at this point (and indeed myself) with this rhetoric. I turned to the next slide in a hurry (slide 6). This was a photo of the Nobel Peace Prize medal. I explained what it was.

“PADA’s special, because...” (I cringed, had a ‘David Brent’ moment, but carried on regardless) “...like those who win this prize through engendering change in an aspect of the world, so too, are we changing the landscape of retirement savings in the UK”.

This statement felt better out than in and I continued with the simile until I sensed my audience believed me.

An interpretation of identity-relevant meaning of vignette (Part II)

The narratives accompanying the three slides focus on statements about why PADA was special, or, in other words, why I thought PADA was distinctive. The narratives I articulated around the image of the ‘enlightened’ Buddha and the Nobel Peace Prize offer easier interpretations than the project plan. These two slides, like those in the first section of the presentation, emphasized facets of PADA’s identity that aligned with those of my own. I used both as a mechanism to maintain my own self-esteem by aligning key PADA characteristics with those I valued in myself (Elsbach 1999). While Helen was the architect of the joint working between policy and implementation which I described as a distinctive feature of PADA, I was its ‘deputy architect’; PADA’s ‘enlightenment’, in this regard, was due to her and me. The symbol of the Buddha served both to emphasize a point of distinctiveness and as a symbol of power. As the calm religious leader ‘beats off the shackles of earthly life’ to achieve a state others only aspire to, so too did we in PADA. The prize’s symbolism served a similar purpose as one awarded to those who achieve something distinctive. For me, the task PADA had to accomplish was also distinctive. The narrative accompanying this slide, as with the picture of Buddha, articulated characteristics I valued in my own identity and projected them onto PADA – the superficial image merely served to emphasize this and make it more easily understandable for the audience.

The second slide, the picture of the project plan, offers different possible interpretations. PADA’s need for detailed planning had been a difficult feature for me. As I wrote in my diary:

“I dialled into the management meeting at two this afternoon.
‘Management meeting’ is not the best of phrases to describe the

session, as we mainly concentrate on the plans and how well strands are doing against it. Julian chaired ... and picked on each strand leader one by one ... [H]e started with design and lingered there, going through each product in detail” (07/04/08).

The plans for implementing the pension scheme prior to PADA being established had been disregarded when the organization had been created. This had a negative impact on those of us that had developed them: my narrative in this section of the presentation is incongruous given this background. Possibly the ‘Road to Damascus’ reference was because I knew others outside the room, hearing I had said this, would welcome these words as a sign of my conversion to their cause. Was my public acceptance of planning, in the detail the organization demanded, an acceptance of others’ power over me? Public acknowledgement was acceptance of this dynamic: this characteristic of PADA’s identity had become my professed understanding of a distinctive characteristic of the organization (Soenen & Moingeon 2002). A further interpretation might be that my public acknowledgment of this organizational characteristic was an attempt further to resist and exercise my own hegemonic ambitions. Through the ‘public act’ of recognizing the importance of planning, I sought to command a ‘moral high ground’. I could acknowledge this distinctive characteristic and yet, at the time of the presentation (and now), mock the veracity of my own statement of support.

7.4.2 My advice to the organization

Vignette: Working for PADA (Part III)

Final section: advice I would leave PADA. It was the part of the presentation I least wanted to give, after all, this was ‘goodbye’. I turned to the next slide (slide 7): a picture of a new-born baby.

“I’m leaving PADA, as you know, after I led the procurement which resulted in TCS being appointed as the contractor to administer the scheme: my work is done! What we’ve delivered

is this (I point to the slide) ... a contract between TCS and ourselves which is nothing ... and yet has the potential to be everything. The contract is a baby – it can't do much unless we nurture it, care for it and, with TCS, be 'good parents'. The danger, I fear, is that we don't do this ... and leave it to grow without the care and discipline it needs. PADA must take TCS under its wing to nurture the contract within that relationship."

I heard someone in the audience say: "That's a good metaphor". (This gave me confidence and for some bizarre reason I made a statement, using the microphone as a prop, about always wanting to be a 'bingo-caller', which I followed with a few 'number catch-phases' – goodness knows which part of my unconscious this had come from, but it provided relief).

Penultimate slide (slide 8): a rocket launching.

"Rather 'cheesy' and obvious this one about going into uncharted waters."

I made the point (somewhat ironically given that I was leaving) how lucky my audience should feel to be working on a project that had never been done before and repeated words from earlier about this project as a once in a lifetime experience for people's careers. Though, for me, it was hollow (it flashed before me that I was leaving ... next private image: amputation in a military hospital somewhere ... next thought: try and find joke ... fail ... silence fell in mid-sentence. I took in water and changed slides to one showing a dictionary highlighting the definition of 'leadership' – slide 9.)

"My final words of advice are that PADA needs to work collectively as a team – one consisting of many talents. Again it's another obvious one, I know..., but it's important to me ... PADA wouldn't be what it is today without the cadre of people it has ... such as you, Helen, ... Sharon, Ian, ... David and... Will..., " I stutter.

I closed to applause and gave a little 'Blairite' bow.

Not until drafting this vignette did I realize the names I highlighted at the end of the presentation were only those of the civil servants that set up PADA with me years before.

An interpretation of identity-relevant meaning of vignette (Part III)

This section of the presentation described what I would change about PADA; given this, my narrative was what I considered were enduring characteristics of the organization. One theme expressed strongly was my perception of PADA's myopia: the organization focused only on the 'next important task on the plan'. The organization's management approach was to direct energies, resources and emotion to a task and once achieved, redirect its attention to the next, leaving that delivered with little support to ensure it worked. It was the journey, not the legacy, which PADA relished and my narrative accompanying the slide of the baby was suggestive of this

characteristic. This interpretation can be read as a metaphor participants often cited in interviews; PADA as a ‘mountain journey’ or ‘trek’. As Liz described it:

“[PADA is like] some kind of Himalayan trek, I think ... where you know where you want to get to, within the Himalayas, but exactly how you’re going to get there you’re not quite sure ... you have to design it yourself ... one that hasn’t been looked at before ... or explored” (LP2:18).

For me, too, it was an enduring characteristic that PADA sequenced its tasks in linear formation, rarely spending time internally reflecting and maturing ‘delivered’ activities. The image of the baby, of course, was personal to me – the contract was ‘my baby’ as much as it was new and represented an immature relationship between two organizations. My accompanying narrative to this slide was a personal plea to PADA: ‘I’ve delivered this contract and if you let it fail, then my legacy in this organization fails’. This was vested interest at play: I was seeking to preserve the status quo of my understanding of what I had achieved in PADA (Starkey & Brown 2000).

The narrative accompanying the image of the team similarly sought to highlight an enduring characteristic of the organization. For me, PADA consisted of an ‘inner circle’ of people who made important decisions; others agreed, as Lynn illustrated in her interview:

“...so there’s an in-crowd ... it’s definitely a boy’s crowd ... there’s a lot of people in the organization that most people know nothing about what their backgrounds are ... Tony, Simon – not so much Julian, I think he’s in and out, you know. I’m never quite sure about him ... I think he wants to be one of the boys ... Tim ... Paul. They’re the big, they’re the sort of big boys” (LM2:10).

There were times when I felt I was part of this and occasions when not. The image of the team sought to highlight this characteristic by implying that PADA did not work

as a team, but as fragmented groups with different levels of power and influence. My story, though, is inconsistent as I mentioned only those people who, along with me, had established PADA years before this presentation. By naming them, I silenced others that played their part in developing the organization: I created my own ‘inner circle’. As with the narrative accompanying the slide of the new-born baby, my motivation was to reinforce my enduring understanding of PADA as a public sector organization, run best within the context of public policy, rather than an organization establishing a private sector pension scheme. What I described throughout this section of the presentation were characteristics of PADA that I suggested should change, although what I narrated were self-interested aspects I wanted to endure once I had left PADA. I wanted these to remain as they supported my self-esteem – PADA as a nurturing organization, ‘caring’ for those tasks I had delivered and an organization born from the public sector and delivering social justice. My articulation of PADA’s identity to this audience was an attempt to preserve an understanding I had of myself.

Vignette: In memoriam

Six months on, I met up first with David, for a pint, and Helen, for dinner. David, mid round, slipped into the conversation how my presentation was often talked about in PADA and Helen subsequently implied the same. I didn’t ask whether this was in a good or negative context, but I sensed the former. However, my thoughts of PADA didn’t bring the overwhelming emotions they did during the presentation – the organization was, so to speak, dead ... weakened memories ... a collection of molecular particles existing somewhere in the back of the mind.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored three interpretations of my understandings of PADA’s identities: I created them by emplotting selected identity-relevant episodes and bringing further experiences from my life into the narrative (Ricoeur 1991). The first interpretation suggests how my understandings of PADA changed over the time I kept

the diary (Empson 2004). It suggested that my narrative of the organization's identities evolved 'with developments in the internal and external environments and ... [that] elements of continuity and change [were] woven into my biographical account' (Chreim 2005, p.567). The second interpretation suggested how my understandings of PADA were influenced, and at times heavily influenced, by the relationship with my boss. In this interpretation, mine and Simon's understandings of PADA's identities were used as vehicles for the exercise of power, 'resulting from the ... interplay of [our] politically motivated [selves]' (Humphreys & Brown 2002a, p.425); I suggested his understanding of the organization often dominated and influenced mine. The final interpretation was constructed from memories of an event just before I left PADA that suggested my understanding of PADA's identities had reverted to that I held when I started keeping my diary two years before. While there are common themes in each interpretation, the three stories are quite different and suggest my plurivocal and conflicting understandings of PADA.

Many scholars have suggested organizations are characterized by multiple and conflicting narrative identities (e.g. Ford 1999; Rhodes 2001): 'as narrative constructions, organizations are emphatically not simple, monolithic or homogeneous' (Brown 2006, p.734). My analysis suggests that I had similarly conflicting and heterogeneous understandings, given what I recorded in my diary and chose to write in this chapter. My understandings of PADA's identities were (and are now) 'constituted and reconstituted through discursive practices' (Humphreys & Brown 2002a, p.423). Bearing this in mind, I recognize that the interpretations presented in this chapter are far from an objective retelling of my experiences of PADA and my understandings of its identities; but this is not what I set out to write.

As Denzin (1995) argues, the link between experience and text cannot be assumed as 'real, live, experiences are shaped by prior [and present] textual representations and understandings' (p.9). The three interpretations were written up to three years after the events were first recorded: they are products of my understanding of myself 'today' with its instabilities and fragility (Visweswaran 1994). 'Tomorrow' too, of course, would elicit a further set of interpretations since my understandings of PADA's identities are still evolving as 'continuous processes of narration' (Czarniawska-Joerges 1994, p.198).

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION

The bias in management thought towards...explanation and mystification...and the attempt at conceptual and methodological closure, perpetuating domination, are without value.

(Rosen 1994, p.319)

8.1 Introduction

‘People who write about organizations tell stories’ and through them ‘meaning is constructed [that becomes] the embodiment of ... organization knowledge’ (Rhodes 2001, p.3) (see also Czarniawska 1997; Gergen 2003; Pentland 1999). This chapter provides readings of the identity-relevant narratives I analysed in the preceding chapters; each discuss how multi-faceted, conflicting and changing claims regarding PADA’s characteristics were used by authors as exercises in power (Chriem 2005; Humphreys & Brown 2002a; Lukes 1974). I acknowledge that by interpreting others, I intervene, as Linstead (1993) warns, in the meaning of participants’ texts (Putnam 1996; Rhodes 2001)³⁵. Additionally, I recognize Richardson’s (1992) dilemma that writing, in its own right, is an exercise of power. The irony of the fact that I focus on how participants exercised power at PADA is not lost on me. The chapter has three sections; each is a reading of the data from a different perspective. The first is constructed through a narrative lens, aided by literature on organizational storytelling (Riessman 1993; Rhodes & Brown 2005). The second takes an organizational identity perspective and the third an auto-ethnographic reading (Jacobson & Jaques 1997). In each, I describe my understandings of the concept of organizational identity through metaphors developed during my experiences of PADA (Gabriel 1999a; Hatch &

³⁵ Indeed as De Cock (1998) argues, ‘Instead of discovering enduring facts of organizational life and reporting them through neutral description, the researcher actively creates truth by assigning meaning to the phenomena he or she observes and experiences’ (p.3).

Yanow 2008; Lakoff & Johnson 2003; Morgan 1986; Tsoukas 1991; cf. Cornelissen 2002a, 2002b). I then make concluding remarks.

8.2 A narrative reading

This reading takes a narrative perspective; it consists of three parts. The first highlights stories that dominated discursive routines in PADA and discusses contradictions in them. The second explores how participants constructed identity-relevant claims with the aid of fiction. I describe how authors weaved statements from their understandings of the organization's past (White 1978) and future (MacIntyre 1981) into their narrated identity for the organization's present (Ricoeur 1991). The final section explores what motivated participants to deploy identity narratives as exercises in power (Clegg 1994; Jermier *et al.* 1994). I close with a metaphor that seeks to describe one of my understandings of organizational identity.

8.2.1 Elements of contradiction in dominant stories

The narratives I recorded in PADA were 'blood vessels [at] ... the heart of organizational life' (Boje 1991b, p.8). Stories were 'creative acts' (Rhodes & Brown 2005, p.167), told to 'make meaning' (Bruner 1997, p.265), enact accounts of participants (Browning 1991) and 'make things rationally accountable' to others (Weick 1993, p.635). This section discusses identity-relevant stories that my analysis suggested dominated discourse in PADA, exploring contradictions within them since, as Chreim (2007) suggests, 'narrative analysis is ... conducive for mapping divergence and convergence of meaning across groups in organizations' (p.452). Indeed, polysemous, organizational 'stories ... [entail] diverse and even contradictory meanings' (Gabriel 2000, p.90) and my purpose is to reveal the level of contention

articulated in stories about PADA's characteristics (Boje 1995). The section has three sub-sections, each of which discusses a dominant story.

The story of PADA as a public or private sector organization

Many identity-relevant narratives contained claims regarding PADA's characteristics as a public or private sector organization. Identity statements referencing sector were made by all those I interviewed and are woven throughout the vignettes told³⁶. Participants recruited from the private sector promoted PADA's characteristics that aligned to their understandings of other private organizations, or suggested, in order to be successful, the organization should adopt these (Gioia *et al.* 2000). This cohort linked narratives about the demands of delivering the pension scheme successfully to articulations of PADA's private sector characteristics, comprising a projection 'of a desired future ... that [communicated] to insiders and outsiders a vision to be achieved' (Gioia *et al.* 2000, p.66) (see also Gioia & Thomas 1996). Additionally, this cohort articulated statements of discomfort, anxiety even, that PADA was controlled by the DWP and Parliament as this directly conflicted with their understandings of PADA's identities. Similarly, participants from the public sector promoted characteristics about PADA that reflected their own work experiences and from which they seemed to draw comfort.

Differences in positions promoted by these two cohorts centred principally on public sector participants' admiration for private sector skills (which was not replicated by private sector participants), that they seemed to accept should be embedded to improve the organization's credibility with its stakeholders (Brown *et al.* 2008;

³⁶ For example, see 'The incident in the lift' in 3.3.1; 'Tim's strand-ups' in 4.3.1; 'May Day bacon butties' in 7.2.1; 'With whom to side' in 7.3.1.

Dutton & Dukerich 1991). Public-sector participants also sought to project understandings of the organization externally as efficient and commercially-focused (Bouchikhi *et al.* 1998) although such understandings did not align to narratives members of this cohort spoke about amongst themselves (cf. Gioia *et al.* 2000).

The conflicting understandings about which sector most characterized PADA is not the only source of contradiction I read within this story however. A further contradiction centres on why ‘sector’ became a dominant theme in the discourse of the organization. While organizations possessing dual, hybrid and multiple identities have long been researched (e.g. Albert & Whetten 1985; Pratt & Foreman 2000), it is curious that ‘sector’ characteristics became such a prominent discursive resource of conflicting understandings about the organization. Empirical studies of identity conflict and multiplicity in organizations identify other cohorts through which contestation was centred, such as conflicting identity narratives at different managerial levels in Humphreys and Brown’s (2002a) study of a Further Education college, among professions in Glynn’s (2000), Empson’s (2004) and Slay and Smith’s (2011) studies, and within business functions in Harrison’s (2000) study of a hospital. In PADA, however, understandings of the organization’s identities focused on the ‘sector’ that most characterized the organization. This seemed contradictory given that more obvious discursive resources existed within the organization that could have served authors’ understandings, and debates pertaining to ‘sector’ were arguably nugatory due to PADA’s legal status.

The context in which PADA existed was clear, legally and financially – the organization was set up by Parliament and financed by the Government and was

envisaged by law as a public sector organization. A possible reason for understandings that were inconsistent with this was that while PADA had been created by the public sector, as private sector participants were recruited there was unwillingness by new recruits to accept this and thus a duality was created in the organization. Tension built between groups, forging ‘the ground on which the struggle for power’ (Westwood & Linstead 2001, p.10) over PADA’s identity was subsequently fought, and this remained throughout the period of my study. Fleming and Spicer’s (2007) framework, which explains dynamics of power and resistance as struggle, offers a scheme to illuminate this. Private sector participants articulated understandings of the organization as a ‘destructive’ discursive struggle against the public sector cohort: ‘a struggle ... to destroy their [opponent’s understandings of PADA] through absolute victory’ (Fleming & Spicer 2007, p.620) and their promotion of private sector characteristics (Laclau & Mouffe 1985). In contrast, I read the public sector cohort’s deployment of their understandings as a ‘loving struggle’ (Jaspers 1932, 1970), where their sector-focused identity narratives sought to manifest and assert voices to offer alternative understandings, while accepting ‘that [their opponents had] the right to exist’ (Fleming & Spicer 2007, p.64).

The story of PADA’s political importance

The industry day that I analysed in chapter 6 also became a dominant story in PADA. Participants believed the organization proved its political importance as an outcome of the event. This view was held universally by those that referred to the day during their interview and with whom I spoke while working in the organization. Participants argued the organization had staged an impressive event, that it had come of age as a potential provider of pensions and demonstrated it could control a message; the event

offered a platform demonstrating PADA's political relevance. Such understandings were forged throughout the event by the sequencing of speakers, politicians, senior officials and key managers from the organization. As Tsoukas (2006) notes, 'narrative is factually indifferent but temporally sensitive: its power as a story is determined by the sequence of its constituents, rather than the truth or falsity of any of them' (p.252) (see also Czarniawska 1998). The grand narrative (Lyotard 1984) that was recounted subsequently about the industry day served to mobilize the dominant, private sector cohort in PADA (Mumby 1988) and the story became part of the regime of truth in the organization (Foucault 1980). However, while the story became embedded within the discourse of the organization and portrayed it as being on an epic journey towards the successful delivery of the pension scheme (Jeffcut 1983), it can be read for conflicting elements that were 'fragmented' and 'multi-layered' (Boje 2001, p.2).

The most significant contradiction I read in this story was found in private sector participants' narratives about the event. Within the organization, this cohort's professed narrative identity promoted the organization's private and financial sector characteristics. PADA needed to be commercially driven, become distinct from the Government and deliver a low cost pension scheme that was affordable for low-to-middle income employees. Given that this narrative was promoted between members of the cohort, why did this group present an understanding of PADA during this event, to a predominantly external audience, which emphasized the organization's public sector characteristics? Projecting such understandings can be read as a device used by senior managers to make a claim of PADA's distinctiveness from the audience of private sector suppliers (Moingeon & Soenen 2002; Smircich 1983). As Gioia (1998) states, 'claims of distinctiveness or uniqueness are rife' (p.21) and

‘organizations ... are expected to display different identities to different audiences’ (Gioia 1998, p.21) as they seek to manage understandings (Jones & Pittman 1982).

However, there are other possible interpretations. Promoting the political relevance of the organization was a legitimizing device: it served to maintain and reproduce senior managers’ power over others (Clegg 1993; Mumby 1987) and sought to discipline staff and the audience attending the event (Deetz & Mumby 1985; Mumby & Stohl 1991); as Witten (1993) surmises, ‘narratives told in organizations may play a role in creating and maintaining a culture of obedience’ (p.113). Additionally, the story of the organization’s political importance was constructed, I suggest, to protect the organization from other pension suppliers attending the event as PADA was creating a pension scheme that would, in time, be a direct competitor to these organizations. By promoting a narrative of political association, PADA’s senior managers sought to protect the organization from its future competitors. Identity-relevant narratives about the organization’s alignment to Government policy served to isolate anxieties PADA held about its future as a pension provider, ‘communicating new sets of power relations’ (Brown 1994, p.872), while silencing narratives articulated internally by participants (Brown & Coupland 2005).

The story that St. Dunstan’s House symbolized PADA’s identity

For many participants, PADA’s move to and occupation of St. Dunstan’s House became woven into their claims of the organization’s identities. The story functioned ideologically and offered senior managers ‘hegemonic discourses, [which became] instruments of domination and obfuscation’ (Gabriel 2004, p.12), providing ‘legitimacy for organizational changes’ and identity control (Rhodes & Brown 2005,

p.173) (see also Deetz & Mumby 1985; Mumby 1988; Witten 1993). Encapsulated in the story were two ideas: first, St. Dunstan's House symbolized PADA's autonomy from the Government and its distinctiveness from other pension providers; secondly, given its location, members of the organization could 'connect' with the pension schemes' future customers.

I read two contradictions in this story. The first asks why senior managers articulated narratives within PADA that suggested St. Dunstan's House was symbolic of the organization's distinctiveness from the Government and other pension providers while externally promoting identity claims of the organization's political importance and its private sector characteristics. This contradiction, I believe, served senior managers as a device to legitimize their position to staff: by narrating PADA as distinct from the Government and other pension providers, it positioned the organization as 'special' and 'unique', seeking to limit employees' desire to return to work for the Government or other pension scheme providers, constituting an example of 'hegemony as it [functioned] at an everyday level' (Mumby & Stohl 1991, p.317).

As Deetz (1995) argues:

'Power is present in the attempt to hold one sign value or articulation as preferable over another. Domination occurs when one articulation is systematically, but arbitrarily, privileged through practices of suppressing alternatives.' (p.219)

Secondly, I suggest, the story was contradictory as it emphasized PADA's 'connectedness' to its customers. For many participants, the office's location, in a run-down borough of London, surrounded by small business and low to middle income earners, served as a discursive identity resource among ourselves and to others that was filled with symbolic meanings (Grafton-Small 1985; Olins 1989).

Never did this translate into action: no member of PADA engaged people, to my knowledge, working in businesses nearby about the scheme, nor did we seek to capitalize on the potential customers beyond the building in the design of the scheme's operation. It would have been inappropriate to have tried. Rather, I suggest, this story was an exercise in power through which senior managers created a myth within the organization about the office: through narrative, they 'saturated [it] with symbolic possibilities' (Brown & Humphreys 2006, p.233). As Kornberger *et al.* (2006) recount:

'Nietzsche highlighted the tremendous power of discourse when he wrote that to 'conceive the origin of language itself as an expression of power on the part of the rulers: they say 'this *is* this and this', they seal every thing and event with a sound and, as it were, take possession of it.' (p.233)

The three stories outlined above represent dominant discursive themes upon which participants structured understandings of PADA's identities. Each, I argue, was power-laden, and through each different linguistic games (Kallinikos 1997) were played to serve the positions their authors sought to promote. Such understandings of PADA, however, were revealed as far from sticky, as Scott and Lane (2000a) argue, or adaptive (Gioia *et al.* 2000), but were highly plastic and malleable: PADA presented 'many "selves" that those with a stake in [it sought to] influence' (Sillince & Brown 2009, p.1844). As Rhodes and Brown (2005) argue, 'narratives [are] well suited for use in political games, where individuals and coalitions need often to present information differently to different audiences to secure acquiescence and enthusiasm' (p.174). While the practice of presenting different understandings of the organization's identities to various audiences has been noted by many scholars (e.g.

Brown 1985; Brown & Kreps 1991), I argue those in PADA changed significantly and render understanding of their reading as contradictory.

8.2.2 Configured identity-relevant narratives as hegemonic devices

This section discusses how participants configured their narratives of the organization's identities, that is the 'sort of identity to which [members of the organization had] access thanks to the mediation of [their] narrative function' (Ricoeur 1991, p.73). Ricoeur's (1991) theory of narrative identity suggests participants blended historical and fictional understandings of PADA into configured narratives of its identities in the present. Stories about the organization were putatively rendered more 'intelligible when ... applied to narrative models – plots – borrowed from history and fiction' (Ricoeur 1991, p.73) (see also Bal 1997; Czarniawska 1998; Gabriel 2004; Polkinghorne 1988). Indeed, Mead (1970) suggests 'the past [constructed] from the standpoint of the new problem of today ... serves us until the rising novelty of tomorrow necessitates a new history which interprets the new future' (p.241) (see also Routledge *et al.* 2011). The identity narratives members of PADA constructed were an attempt to come to terms with 'the reconstructed past, the perceived present and anticipated future' of the organization (McAdams 1996, p.307). My discussion focuses on why participants narrated events and their experiences of PADA's past and its possible futures to promote understandings of the organization's identities in the present (Schultz & Hernes 2012). Additionally, I seek to read the effect this had on organizational action (Schön 1983), control (Witten 1993), and the hegemonic ambitions of the authors (Clegg 1989; Rhodes 2000). The discussion is divided into two sections, each of which utilizes a notion of Ricoeur's

(1991) concept of a narrative identity, that is identity as multi-faceted and emplotment.

Narrated identities of PADA as multi-faceted

Ricoeur's (1991) conception of a narrated identity suggests that a collective's identities are far from stable; rather, as discursive constructs, they provide participants 'with important symbolic resources for identity negotiation' (Read & Bartkowski 2000, p.398) and as 'assemblages [were] essentially contingent..., fragile' (Brown & Humphreys 2006, p.233) and consisted of 'fragments' of ideas (Boje 2001, p.5). Many narratives I articulated about working in PADA and reconstructed in this thesis suggest my understandings of the organization were far from stable, but were 'fragmented, tentative, experimental and ever-changing' (Gabriel 2000, p.130) (see also Tsoukas & Chia 2002), serving the context in which the narratives were set (Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003). Such multi-faceted understandings of the organization were the result of hegemonic forces deployed which influenced what I have narrated in the present. This was demonstrated in the event I narrated in the vignette in 7.3.1 ('With whom to side'), for example, which recounts an episode between my boss, Simon, and I. During this event, involving a network of conversations, I narrated different understandings of PADA's identity to Simon and senior managers in the DWP. This demonstrated my multi-faceted understandings of identities and also how I used my configured understanding of the organization in the present to preserve and legitimize my own position in the DWP in the present: 'this process goes on unnoticed, as when actors subconsciously reproduce past experience as a means of moving forward' (Schultz & Hatch 2012, p.1). As I was an employee of the DWP and knew I would probably have to return to it once I left PADA, I

articulated an understanding of the organization that serviced a need to ‘side with the DWP’ rather than a view I knew aligned with Simon’s understandings. As a consequence of my multi-faceted understandings of the organization, my actions were influenced, illustrated by the fact that on this occasion I changed the wording in the PIN notice, against the direct instructions of my boss.

Such behaviour could also be observed in the identity-relevant narratives I articulated concerning the event on HMS Belfast (outlined in section 7.4). Through the narratives accompanying my slides (see Appendix 6), I articulated events from PADA’s past (e.g. meetings I had with the previous chair of PADA – slide 2) and fantasies about its future (e.g. narratives about the effect PADA’s pioneering work would have on customers’ in their retirement – slide 3) to promote a configured understanding of the organization for the audience in the present. Historical narratives about PADA were fused into an identity in the present that told the audience what I believed they wanted to hear and promoted my understanding of the organization in order for me to be remembered (Pentland 1999). What I claimed in my narrative identity of the organization during this event was significantly different from constructs I had articulated to others in PADA previously. My narrative identity for the organization, set in the present, served to resist those understandings and promote a new one from the vantage point of my imminent departure from the organization. Thus, my ‘present’ identity was ‘part of an interpretive struggle’ and contrasted with what I had said before (Boje 1995, p.1030).

Emplotment as a mechanism for identity control

According to Ricoeur (1991), emplotment is a process through which experience is synthesized in narrative (Ezzy 2005). As he explains, ‘narrative constructs the identity of the character ... [and it] is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character’ (Ricoeur 1992, pp.147–148). Participants in PADA used emplotment effectively to promote their understandings of the organization’s identities to others. The narrated identities articulated during the industry day were a demonstration of this: senior managers constructed new understandings of the organization for the audience, mainly prospective suppliers, whom they sought to impress, while creating a narrative about the organization that shaped staff’s understandings of PADA. Senior managers narrated identities of the organization configured in its past, into a putatively coherent storyline. These suggested the organization was on a successful journey, fully in command of its destiny, and that the outcome of its work would result in the successful delivery of the pension scheme. This narrative identity was an attempt to control the audience’s impression of PADA and demand the obedience of its staff (Witten 1993). The narrative set in the present was one which omitted the conflict within the organization’s programme since to include it would have been to signal an organization without an agreed identity, out of touch with modernist views of a ‘harmonious’ business. As Chreim (2005) argues, ‘an organizational identity narrative reflects power positions and authorial preferences’ (p.570). The narrated identity configured in the present served to eliminate possible inconsistencies that would have impacted negatively upon external views of the organization (Dutton & Dukerich 1991).

8.2.3 Motives for identity-relevant narratives deployed as exercises in power

Participants' identity-relevant narratives suggested their understandings of the organization's central, distinctive and enduring characteristics were influenced by their hegemonic ambitions; albeit, as Rhodes' (2002) concept of organizational heteroglossia suggests, 'all monological truth claims are relativised against other views of the world in a way that counters the hegemony of single languages and absolute forms of thought' (p.107). While my analysis suggested participants' identity narratives were deployed as exercises in power, I did not discuss the reasons why they did so. What motivated participants to narrate understandings of the organization's characteristics among other members and to those outside the organization? This section discusses the motives I interpreted participants had during my study, articulated through my tales from the field (Van Maanen 1988). The section is in five parts, each outlining a motive that drove participants to articulate understandings of the organization. While I discuss these individually, I recognize their interdependence in that participants employed more than one of the following motives in their articulations of PADA: (i) to promote their own or their cohort's understandings, (ii) to resist others' understandings, (iii) to legitimize positions, (iv) to defend against anxiety, and (v) to create a sense of mystery in the organization. Each is discussed below.

To promote their own or their cohort's understandings

The motive I interpreted most frequently was where participants sought to promote their own, or their cohort's, understandings of PADA: the intent was to change or replace others' understandings with their own. The dynamics of this motive align to Dahl's (1957) conception of power, I suggest, 'as a relation among people' (p.202) so

that understandings of identities were exchanged through dialogue and in networks of conversations in which participants sought to render their own understandings as more credible and cogent than those of others (Ford 1999; Hazen 1993). As Humphreys and Brown (2002a) argue, the ‘stories that are authored through dialogue are one symbolic means by which meanings are variously negotiated, shared and contested’ (p.422). For example, members of the private sector cohort progressively sought to promote their own understandings of the organization over the period of my study. They presented PADA as an efficient, commercially-led organization, rather than a collective engaged on a Government pension reform programme. Their motivation was to replace the public sector cohort’s narrative with theirs, claim PADA’s identity for their own purposes, and, in so doing, ‘delegitimate’, as Mumby (1987, p.114) describes it, public sector understandings. Additionally, the private sector cohort sought control of their colleagues: ‘narratives not only evolve[d] as a product of certain power structures, but also function[ed] ideologically to produce, maintain and reproduce those power structures’ (Mumby 1987, p.113) (see also Giddens 1976). In PADA, participants used their understandings of identity ideologically as a mechanism to promote themselves within the organization.

A further example was highlighted in the vignette in 7.4.1: ‘What motivated me to work in PADA’. Here my purpose was to describe what I understood were the central characteristics of the organization: its desired effect was to deliver a pension scheme to low-income employees, an organization in the public sector with a moral responsibility to the Government’s policy agenda, and play a critical role in UK citizens’ lives. These were my understandings of the organization described in a context in which I was in control (I was giving a presentation to others) and in which

my purpose was to influence my audience's understandings of the organization through the promotion of my own.

To resist others' understandings

A further reason why participants deployed linguistic understandings of PADA as an exercise of power was to resist others' conceptions. As Knights (2004) argues, 'resistance in ... organizations will tend to be ... focused on issues connected with threats to one or other identity' (p.19). In these episodes participants used their own understandings of the organization's characteristics, not to propose their own, but to resist those promoted by others. This was particularly observable, I suggest, in the dialogical exchanges between myself and my boss, Simon. In the networks of conversations between us (Ford & Ford 1995), as recorded in my diary and recounted in vignettes, I read my resistance to Simon's understandings of PADA by presenting my claims in return. This was, as Castells (1997) categorizes it, an example of 'resistance identity – where [the] dominated challenge dominant identities on the basis of different principles' (pp.9–10): I challenged Simon's understandings principally on our conflicting stances on PADA's sector characteristics. Jermier *et al.* (1994) argue that resistance is a 'reactive process where agents embedded in power relations [such as, understandings about an organization's identity] actively oppose initiatives by other groups' (p.9). In situations with Simon, my resistance represented a 'particular relationship with power, one which [did] not simply repeat or reiterate its discursive logic but [blocked] it, [challenged] it' (Fleming & Spicer 2007, p.31). I resisted his understandings by counter-proposing my own.

To legitimize their own positions

While scholars highlight that organizational members legitimize the work of their organization to maintain their self-esteem (e.g. Aldrich & Fiol 1994; Brown 1997; Pfeffer & Salancik 1978) and that ‘dominant [members and cohorts] extend and rationalize their domination through identity’ (Castells 1997, pp.9–10) (see also Sennett 1986), few (e.g. Gagliardi 1986; Rosen 1985) explore explicitly the deployment of identity-relevant narratives as mechanisms to legitimize the author’s position within the organization. In PADA, I interpreted the narratives of some participants as mechanisms of control through which authors sought to legitimize their positions and consequently promote themselves in the organization. This was demonstrated, I argue, in the conflicting narratives about which sector most characterized the organization, where the private sector cohort’s concept sought to replace the public sector cohort’s understandings, as I mentioned above. Additionally, it was demonstrated throughout the narratives articulated about PADA during the industry day. During this event, senior managers portrayed a conception of the organization as on a journey to the successful delivery of the pension scheme and in so doing, sought to reaffirm to suppliers and Government officials their control within and of PADA.

To defend against anxiety

Understandings of PADA’s identities were also deployed, I suggest, as a defence against participants’ feelings of anxiety (Freud A. 1966; Freud S. 1894). Jaques (1955) suggests members of organizations unconsciously use their institutions as mechanisms to defend against anxiety. Moreover, Diamond (1993), Diamond and Allcorn (2003) and Hirschhorn (1990) all argue that groups and individuals

experiencing anxiety in organizations deploy social defences that impact on the organization's effectiveness and understanding of itself: 'feelings of anxiety are the fundamental roots of distorted or alienated relationships at work' (Hirschhorn 1990, p.10). Indeed, groups control their anxiety by deploying social defences, where 'people construct realities wherein threats and concerns within the unconscious mind become embodied in structures for coping with anxiety in the outside world' (Morgan 1986, p.215). In an organizational context, theory developed by Brown and Starkey (2000) suggests groups and individuals deploy ego-defensive behaviours in order to maintain a status quo of understandings of the organization's identity and that:

...information that threatens an organization's [or group's] self-concept is ignored, rejected, reinterpreted, hidden or resisted, and the processes by which organizations preserve their identities are, in many ways, analogous to the methods that individuals employ in defence of their own self-concepts (p.103).

Following from this, I suggest one reason why participants deployed identity-relevant statements as exercises in power was to defend against anxiety. I read this in many of my own narratives, such as in the vignette in 3.3.1 ('The incident in the lift'), during which the exchange between the new CEO and me was a 'trade' in our understandings of central characteristics of the organization. I believe mine were antithetical to his and were deployed to defend against my feelings of uncertainty about his plans to commercialize the organization and reject my understandings of PADA as principally driving social policy reform.

To create a sense of mystery in the organization

Participants exercised power through identity-relevant narratives by creating a sense of mystery about PADA. In these episodes, participants used understandings of PADA's identities to create a 'method of deception' (Feyerabend 1975, p.45) about

its uniqueness (Albert & Whetten 1985; Selznick 1957) for colleagues within the organization and external stakeholders. As Martin *et al.* (1983) argue ‘organizational cultures, and, in particular, organizational stories, carry a claim to uniqueness – that one institution is unlike any other’ (p.438). I suggest participants used understandings of PADA’s identities in order to differentiate it and promote it as ‘unique’; as a result, myths were created within the organization for its stakeholders. I interpreted this on a number of occasions, but most notably during the industry day. During this event, PADA was described by senior managers as ‘unique’ to the audience and ‘special’ for staff attending the event. For the audience of suppliers, senior managers’ narratives created stories that suggested PADA was differentiated: it was integral to the Government and yet competitive in the pensions administration market. For staff, the narrative characterized PADA as an exceptional opportunity to work in a differentiated organization. As Gluckman (1965a) argues, ‘myth functions especially whenever there is a sociological strain: such as in matters ... of power ... and subordination’ (p.284).

8.2.4 Metaphor I: Organizational members’ understandings of the collective’s identity as a bubble

Every child is brought a pot of bubble mixture, usually a small yellow container of ‘washing-up’ liquid with a plastic straw through which you blow to create bubbles. My children quizzed me about why a square hole did not produce a square bubble, when they had observed a circle tendered a sphere. I answered (recalling my dim and distant knowledge of physics) that, regardless of the shape of the straw, the bubble always formed into a round because this demands the least energy: it is the easiest shape for the bubble to sustain.

My observations of how PADA’s identities emerged showed the creation of a bubble. Understandings of identities were created, maintained and influenced by exercises of power – blowing through the tube, cohorts created identities for the organization when it was first established. Whatever the initial shape – square, triangle or sphere – it almost immediately adopted the easiest form it could according to cohorts’ ‘regime[s] of truth’ (Foucault 1980, p.131). For example, understandings of which sector most characterized PADA formed first because these represented the easiest comparable (and safest) reference points for participants and the cohorts to which they belonged. Of course, these understandings survived until external threats took their toll, after which there was always another bubble (understanding of identity) to take its place – always another set of understandings to replace it.

8.3 An organizational identity reading

In this section I reflect on organizational identity literature to provide a further reading of my analysis. The reading consists of three parts, which again I intersperse with metaphorical vignettes that describe my thoughts on collective identities. The first part discusses multiple understandings participants' held about PADA's identities. The second explores how senior managers, in particular, promoted understandings of the organization's identities in performances to staff and external stakeholders. The third section closes the reading with a discussion of how claims regarding PADA's characteristics changed over time: I suggest influencing factors and comment on the stability of identity understandings.

8.3.1 Multiple understandings of PADA

Some scholars of collective identity argue organizations can be 'conceptualized as having many "selves"' (Pratt & Foreman 2000, p.18) (see also Ashforth & Mael 1989; Glynn 2000; Sillince & Jarzabkowski 2004). The identity-relevant narratives I analysed about PADA suggested participants did not articulate a single or monolithic story about the organization's characteristics, but rather articulated multiple understandings that often competed, that is descriptions of PADA's characteristics were markedly different between members of the organization (Brown *et al.* 2005). This observation coheres with Pratt and Foreman's (2000) definition of multiple organizational identities as 'different conceptualizations [that] exist regarding what is central, distinctive and enduring about the organization' (p.20). Multiple understandings of PADA were narrated throughout my 'lived experience' (Denzin 1995, p.9) and are inherent in my interpretation of the data I collected and presented in the previous chapters. The multiplicity of identities, articulated by individuals and

groups, made determining a homogeneous statement of PADA's characteristics a nugatory exercise and suggest the organization's characteristics were a heterogeneous set of participant accounts.

While the conflicting accounts of PADA (as a public or private sector organization; as a project or as an entity with a long-term future, for example) made analysing the data difficult, I took comfort from Glynn *et al.* (2000) who argue that theoretical development in the field of organizational identity is hampered by homogenized accounts of identity statements conceived as a 'set of categorical claims' (Whetten & Mackey 2002, p.397). As Harrison (2000) remarks, in her organizational ethnographic study, 'I heard many varied and conflicting descriptions of what [the organization] was from those [to] whom I spoke ... [but] it is well recognized in embedded intergroup theory that different groups within organizations will see that institution differently' (p.427). This was certainly the case in PADA, as my analysis highlights in chapter 5 in particular: the organization was conceptualized in multiple ways by individuals and cohorts. In this section I discuss two issues regarding PADA's multiple identities. Firstly, the sources members drew upon to articulate the organization's identities, and secondly, how successful participants were at imposing their understandings about the organization on others.

Sources of identity narratives

While participants' narratives of PADA's characteristics suggested an organization with multiple identities, I did not explore in my analysis the sources which participants drew upon to articulate these. Did linguistically-constructed identities originate from individual's experiences of other organizations or were they sourced

from the society to which PADA belonged? The most notable observation from my exploration of participants' understandings was the incongruence of claims and statements made about PADA's characteristics. Whilst there were general topics that were used to describe the organization's features expressed through statements such as those about the industry day and our move to St. Dunstan's House, more broadly, individuals' statements, I argue, were highly idiosyncratic: no two descriptions were the same. Identity statements were reflexively constructed and articulated about PADA's characteristics so while identity claims were similar, they were never the same nor ever contextualized in the same way (Brown 2006).

Nor did statements remain the same over time. Indeed, analysis of my own narratives suggests they changed significantly over the time I kept my diary: as Harrison (2000) argues, 'individual staff members continually re-imagined the [organization] as they negotiated their sense of organizational self in the web of multiple factors that constituted their social worlds' (p.428). In my data, identity statements were a collection of unique understandings of the organization, reflexively produced by participants. This is suggestive of Pratt's (2003) aggregate idea of collective identity which views identity as the 'summation of each individual's identity-related cognitions' (p.170). However, I observed that these idiosyncratic understandings were shared widely among participants and became 'inherently comparative', as Corley *et al.* (2006, p.87) argue.

Other sources that fuelled identity statements came from the context and society in which PADA operated. This was most evident in the narratives regarding sector, but also in the identity narratives that sought to suggest PADA was part of the pensions

industry while remaining distinct from it (King *et al.* 2010). Pratt and Kraatz (2009) argue that an organization possesses identities that are anchored in its societal context, and while there was evidence of this in PADA, the broader society and context in which it belonged seemed to feature less significantly as a discursive source of identity than individuals' own reflexive understandings of the organization. This may have been because the content of what PADA sought to achieve (i.e. the creation of a new pension scheme) was unique and therefore there were few reference points on which to draw. Also, however, I observed a desire by senior managers to control understandings of PADA's characteristics and to allow external references would have been to jeopardize this intent.

Multiplicity of identity narratives as an exercise in power

Scholars who study the multiplicity of identities in organizations claim that many understandings of an organization can be harnessed by its members to produce strategic outcomes (Sillince & Jarzabkowski 2004) and to verify and legitimize the organization (Pratt & Kraatz 2009; Sillince & Brown 2009). In PADA, participants used multiple understandings of the organization as exercises in power wherein the organization's many identities were used to blend and differentiate the organization from others and serve as a hegemonic device for the organization's leaders. For example, senior managers emphasized PADA's political relevance to make it distinctive for other members of the organization (highlighting its Governmental connections) while rejecting these internally and promoting its private sector efficiency. Both these narratives were a way of legitimizing the positions of their authors and sought to secure the organization's survival in a difficult economic and political climate.

An intriguing question remains about whether or not senior managers' conception of how they desired PADA's identity to be perceived succeeded in becoming the dominant and accepted understanding of the organization. My analysis is far from conclusive in providing any definitive outcome on this point. For some participants it would seem that this was the case – they 'bought' into the senior narratives promoted by Tim and his circle. For others, including me, this seems to be far from the case. One interpretation of my understandings of PADA's identity, for example, is that they were shaped, accepted and forced to align with my boss', both because I wanted to accept his understandings and because acceptance was the easiest action to take. However, my narratives at the end of my job in the organization reveal resistance to these understandings as I publicly promoted my resistance to Helen's directorate in the presentation I gave on HMS Belfast (see chapter 7). Of course an answer lies in participants' minds and in the interpretation offered in my text: I can write an interpretation of how PADA's senior managers actually resolved the multiple identities of the organization through their exercise of hegemony just as easily as arguing that they did not. However, what I observed was far more complex than these simple readings imply. PADA's multiple identities developed and grew at different rates; some felt more dominant in some weeks than others, but all were used to serve different occasions and by authors to further their own careers, their conceptions of the organization's identities and to defend against their anxieties.

8.3.2 Metaphor II: Organizational identity as a beam of light

Imagine you are in a modern art gallery, the room painted white. On one side of it are hundreds of projectors, projecting beams of light onto the opposite wall. Each beam shows a slightly different colour: one that is unique. As the beams hit the wall, they coalesce into clusters. Projected on the wall for view is a mixture of new colours.

Individuals project their own understandings of their collective's identities within the organization. This is unique, personalized to an individual's class, culture, race, background,

personality and previous work experiences, for example. As individuals articulate their understandings of their organization's identities, this is projected or 'read back' among many others' views and changes into a mixture of colours, influenced by others.

8.3.3 Promotion of PADA's identities in organizational performances

In this section I discuss how participants' claims about PADA's identities were promoted through performance. Following Goffman's theory that 'characterized social life as dramaturgy ... [where] people act out the roles they wish to claim', my discussion focuses on how performances to staff and the organization's external stakeholders were used to promote understandings of PADA's identities (Ashforth 1989, p.216). Hatch and Schultz (2004) argue that 'identity is a performance [where] ... the actor's skills are relevant to controlling or managing the impressions identity performances leave on others' (p.12). Thus, 'identity is constituted through action and audience reaction' (Ashforth 1989, p.216) and is dependent on place, audience response and time (Beech 2008; Goffman 1959a). My observation of some events at PADA suggested senior managers wove identity-relevant narratives into their performances to legitimize their claims about the organization and secure control over others in it. Performance was a mechanism through which participants promoted their own understandings of the organization's identities, win loyalty and achieve discipline from their audience. This section is divided into two sub-sections: performances involving staff in PADA and external performances, predominantly for the organization's stakeholders.

Internal performances promoting PADA's identities

Linguistic understandings of PADA's identities were woven within performances of internal organizational communications. These were predominately claims articulated by senior managers that sought to control other participants' understandings of

PADA's characteristics (Witten 1993). A notable series of events are recounted in the vignette in 4.3.1: 'Tim's stand-ups'. These sessions were held weekly and, as I described, were an opportunity for PADA's CEO to update the organization about what he had done during the previous week. The events were performances: they were staged as an opportunity for the CEO to relay messages to his audience, predominantly those promoting his understandings of the organization's identities.

During each week's performance was the 'new starter' initiation process. In this routine the CEO's understandings of the organization's identities were played out most obviously; as Rosen (1985) suggests, 'the social relationships, concepts, assumptions, and values of social process, normally opaque, are through ritual made visible' (p.47) (see also Berger & Luckmann 1966). The narratives articulated during this ritual demonstrated how identity claims were embedded within public organization communications (Gluckman 1965b). Critical to the success of the routine was that the entire membership of the organization was encouraged to be involved and the attendance of staff was engineered. New starters, who were the subject of the 'initiation', were placed literally centre stage and in front of the organization's members. However, it was the interaction between the CEO and his audience that was suggestive of how this performance served to promote Tim's understandings of the organization's identities. As the previous role and company name from which the new starter had joined was articulated, the CEO directed the reaction of the audience, the most positive response being awarded to those from the private sector, such as investment banks, and the least to those from public sector institutions. This can be interpreted as PADA's senior executive favouring private sector staff, especially those from the financial industry, over others, particularly public sector organizations. The

performer, Tim, deployed stereotypes – and in some cases the humiliation of the new starter – to emphasize his message. Identity was being performed by deliberately emphasizing certain aspects of what he valued. This resonates with Ashforth (1989) who remarks: ‘identities are selected at least somewhat *deliberately*. Indeed, an understanding may commonly choose to enact not only certain identities, but certain facets of the identities [in their performance]’ (p.216).

The audience, which I characterized in the story as the ‘mob’, played a significant role in this performance by demonstrating loyalty for the performer and his message. This is what Goffman (1959a) refers to as a dramaturgical loyalty, stating that ‘teammates must act as if they have accepted certain moral obligations’ (p.38). In this context, the audiences accepted Tim’s invitation to cheer new starters from the private sector and be less positive, even negative, about public sector recruits.

Identity performances to external audiences

PADA’s identities were also articulated by senior managers in performances to external audiences. The industry day was such an event, during which a series of speakers sought to ‘sell’ the organization as worthy of investment by potential suppliers. During the event there was tacit co-operation between speakers and their audience: ‘social drama is the instrument through which the social order is reinforced, and through it political control’ (Rosen 1985, p.48). This performance, which emphasized the importance of PADA’s work politically, its journey to deliver the scheme efficiently and its history of overcoming challenges, required discipline from the performers. As Goffman (1959a) remarked, ‘a performer who is disciplined, dramaturgically speaking, is someone who remembers his post and does not commit

unmeant gestures ... in performing it' (p.40). My opening address, changed by Tim, was an example of a potential performance disruption (Goffman 1959a) and thus the messages held within it had the potential of being considered an 'inept performance ... [that could have caused] public criticism of the [organization] with whom dramaturgical co-operation [was sought]' (p.37). The event and the performances made during it were disciplined, promoting certain senior managers' understandings of the organization.

The audience was entirely complicit in the performance during the event and their response (warm applause, encouraging remarks in the interval, and their attention) served to aid delivery of the message senior managers sought to project about PADA's identities. As Goffman (1959a) notes, 'the audience contributes in a significant way to the maintenance of a show by exercising tact or protection on behalf of the performers' (p.52). Additionally, given the setting of the industry day, the grandeur and location of Church House made both performers and audience act in character, enabling senior managers' message of PADA's identities to be made 'salient by the setting ... [as] part of the power of organizational settings is that they tacitly tell us who to be, and thereby, what to do, think, and even feel' (Ashforth 1989, p.216). The performance and audience response were mechanisms by which certain understandings of the organization's identities were rendered more powerful.

8.3.4 Metaphor III: Organizational identity as a piece of modern music

In 1962, the Hungarian composer György Ligeti wrote <i>Poème Symphonique for 100 Metronomes</i> ³⁷ . The piece was written while the composer followed the Fluxus movement – fluxus, from the Latin, 'to flow' (Drott 2004). As the title of the work suggests, the piece requires 100 metronomes for the performance, all of which are placed on tables on a stage and set to 'tick' at different speeds, or tempo. On the command of the conductor, ten

³⁷ A metronome is a device, used by musicians, that produces regular metric ticks.

‘performers’ start the metronomes simultaneously – as much as possible. The performance commences with a cacophony of sound, with all 100 devices ‘ticking’ at different speeds so that the individual metronomes are inaudible. Over the course of the performance, the metronomes wind down, one after another, until all of them stop, signalling the end of the piece. During the performance patterns of rhythms become discernible, constituted by groups of metronomes³⁸.

I consider the linguistic understandings of an organization’s identities to be represented by this piece. As a performance, the piece is dramatic to observe. As a work of music, it is ineffective as a recording, and is far more powerful to hear as a live performance as it is substantially different each time it is performed. This is also the case with articulations of an organization’s identities, eliciting different understandings in how terms of how they are captured at each reading. As with the metronomes, in relation to linguistic understandings of an organization’s identities, groups of voices become dominant and more audible to the audience. The individual rhythms of the metronomes coalesce to create patterns of sound, just as the articulations of individuals of the collective in organizations coalesce into discernible themes. Over time, the themes, or rhythmic patterns, fall away as individual metronomes stop ‘ticking’, leaving dominant themes in the listeners’ minds.

8.3.5 Identity change as a method of control

To what extent did understandings of PADA’s identities change over the period of my study and what factors influenced this? In this section I discuss statements concerning PADA’s identities over time and how changing claims made about the organization’s characteristics were deployed as exercises in power. The identity statements I recorded throughout my study were, as Kornberger and Brown (2007) argue, ‘linguistic accomplishments outlined within discursive regimes which [provided] social actors with important symbolic resources for identity negotiation’ (p.499) (see also Grey 1994). Statements about PADA were constituted, as Weick (1995) contends, ‘out of the process of interaction’ (p.20) and iteratively through networks of conversations (Ford 1999; Ford & Ford 1995). As linguistic accomplishments, they were reflexively produced by individuals: indeed, identities were continually ‘constituted in narrative texts that [were] ... reflexively woven by organizational authors ... [who] utilize[d] themes and discursive strategies that establish[ed] continuity and/or change’ (Chreim 2005, p.569) (see also Brown 2006). I argue that

³⁸ Performances of the piece are available on the Internet on YouTube.

authors deployed their changing understandings of PADA as strategies to control the collective's understandings of the organization's identity. The section discusses an interpretation of participants' understandings of PADA's identities, which I follow with a discussion on the extent to which such change was engineered by participants to control others' understandings.

PADA was set up in July 2007, but it had already 'existed' before it was established by Parliament as the organization and its proposed characteristics had been a topic of many discussions within the department in the preceding 12 months. These debates were predominantly between public sector staff within the DWP and characterized PADA's identity as an organization delivering public policy and pension reform, and delivering a pension scheme that focused on better outcomes for its members. Thus, PADA was an organization created linguistically, a means which emphasized its public sector background, and was authored reflexively by participants who valued such characteristics. Over time, as the organization grew in number, this understanding changed. Alternative claims about the organization's desired characteristics began to emerge and eventually came to dominate as recruits from the private sector joined the organization. As Clark *et al.* (2009) argue, 'there is, however, a consensus that while the power of discursive practices affects everyone, because there are competing discourses, socialization into any one discourse is never complete, and resistance to specific discursive regimes is thus possible' (p.325). These characteristics were suggestive of the organization's commercial nature, its need to create a sustainable business model and to deliver the pension scheme to plan in an efficient manner. In PADA, a plurivocity of understandings existed overtly about how the organization should be characterized. As Rhodes' (2002) theory

suggests, PADA was constituted by competing centrifugal and centripetal forces that colluded linguistically so that ‘the centrifugal force of heteroglossia oppose[d] the centralizing imposition of the monological world through multi-vocal discourse’ (p.107).

One reading of discourse suggests the principal understanding of PADA’s identity was that the public sector view was replaced over time by the private sector view. This exercise in power by one cohort over another resulted in episodes of resistance that I noted throughout my analysis. As Chreim (2007) remarks, ‘members of a group ... view identity erasure or discontinuity negatively when they value their current identity and ... they may attempt to protect their identity if they consider the group they are joining to be inferior’ (p.453). I suggest the integration of an expanding private sector cohort into the organization was resented by the existing public sector cohort, who believed changes of understandings were being made to PADA’s identities that resulted in organizational characteristics which were inferior (Chriem 2007; Wry *et al.* 2011). While such changes were not immediate as recruits from the private sector were made progressively, the changing attitudes imply little continuity of understandings of PADA’s identity. Gioia *et al.*’s (2000) argument that organizational identity could be characterized as adaptively unstable is a concept that could be used to describe this. However, whilst Gioia *et al.* (2000) argue that ‘instability in identity actually confers benefits to the organization, because it allows better adaption to the demands of an environment that is itself undergoing continuous change’ (p.65), I argue that in PADA it was used as a mechanism of control. This contrasts with Cobb and Rifkin’s (1991) and Cobb’s (1993) assertions that power-suffused narratives, such as understandings of identity that are earliest and most

coherently promoted, tend to prevail over those formulated later, which remain marginalized and resisted. This was not seemingly the case in PADA as early understandings of the organization which persisted were later dominated by other views. This was, I argue, due to the private sector cohort's mobilization and cogency of the private sector narratives about the organization's identity, which, as Mumby and Stohl (1991) argue, involved a dialectical relation between cohorts, where the outcome was the public sector becoming increasingly subordinate to the view of the private sector understanding (Lukes 1974). This, in turn, changed social relations between the cohorts: instead of public sector participants feeling they were in control of the organization's identity which they had created, their understandings were progressively replaced by other understandings.

While this remains my preferred interpretation, another asks how successful identity change was. Behaviours displayed during the event I outlined in section 7.4 on HMS Belfast suggested open and public resistance to private sector understandings, articulated by me, were received well by others. The issue in contention is that understandings of PADA's identity that dominated within the organization changed over time and constituted a duel between private and public sector cohorts in that understandings promoted by one cohort were replaced by another. This was an attempt by the private sector to gain control of understandings, one which I suggest failed as public sector conceptions, while silenced, remained throughout my study of the organization, silence being secured through coercion as well as hegemony (Brown & Coupland 2005; Clair 1998).

8.4 An auto-ethnographic reading

The final reading is an auto-ethnographic reflection of my identity-relevant narratives analysed about PADA: I explore how I implicated myself within the data I chose to represent in previous chapters. As Atkinson *et al.* (2003) suggest, ‘for auto-ethnographers their ethnographic data are situated within their personal experience and sense-making. They themselves form part of the representational process in which they are engaging and are part of the story they are telling’ (p.62). I structure the reading through three concepts: how my data can be read as a statement of fantasy, hubris and love. Through each, I describe what directed my research and explore how the material I chose to record was influenced by these concepts. In doing so, I took Coffey’s (1999) advice that researchers should become aware of how their work implicates themselves and their personal identity. Indeed, as Birch (1998) describes her research experience:

The more I progressed into the analysis and the writing up and so into my own personal, private space, the more I became aware of the emergence of my own sociological identity. I was the author who was choosing to make certain arguments and explanations. (p.183)

With this in mind, the reading is a reflection of my own journey and emotions of understanding PADA’s identities (Voronov & Vince 2012). Additionally, it is a reflection on the authorship of this piece of social research and an exploration of my voice within it: as Hatch and Wisniewski (1995) contend, ‘[while there is] the espoused goal of encouraging other voices to be heard, the loudest voice is that of the author’ (p.131), the imperialist powerbroker as Scheurich (1997) describes it. The reading is in three sections, each reflecting on the narrative material I presented as a statement of fantasy, hubris and love.

8.4.1 A statement of fantasy

To what extent was the analysis of my understandings of PADA's identities a work of fantasy and, if significant, why did I deploy it within this thesis? Laughlin (1970) describes fantasies as unconscious acts undertaken to fulfil impossible objectives and aspirations; they allow us to substitute satisfaction. My reading of the analysis chapters suggests that fantasies played a significant part in the constitution of this thesis and in how I constructed my understandings of PADA's identities. Gabriel (2000) makes the point that 'some fantasies are more developed than others, though each have a distinct emotional tone, unleashing a different set of feelings, such as self-pity, pride, defiance or mirth' (p.41). While each of these characteristics were evident in my text, Gabriel (2000) argues fantasy maintains a firm link with reality: as Bakhtin (1981) suggests, 'the fantastic in folklore is a realistic fantastic: in no way does it exceed the limits of the real' (pp.150–151). Indeed, 'fantasy offers to individuals and groups a third way, one that accounts to neither conformity nor rebellion, but a symbolic refashioning of official organizational practices in the interest of pleasure, allowing a temporary supremacy of uncontrol over control and spontaneous emotion over the organization's emotional script' (Gabriel 2000, p.126) (see also Vince 2011). This seems to be the case in my account of PADA: I deployed fantasy in the portrayal of my and others' understandings of the organization's identities to present the organization in a way that gave me most control over the narratives recorded in this thesis. In this section I highlight elements of fantasy within my text and discuss how this affected my soliloquies, dialogue and analysis within this thesis (Athens 1994).

It is through the series of vignettes that I fantasized most about my understandings of PADA's identities. Throughout these, I manipulated my observations to present participants' conceptions of PADA's identities as confrontational in order to reflect more ably on my own multiple understandings of the organization. In the vignettes I represented PADA's identities through the identity-relevant narratives of different cohorts and how they used their understandings to conflict with others to promote PADA. While there is substantive narrative evidence to support this, the vignettes are constructed principally with the aid of fantasy. For example, there is fantasy in the vignette in 3.3.1, describing the occasion on which I met PADA's new CEO for the first time. I present the dialogue as a conflict of understandings about the organization, pitched between two ideological views of how the organization should be characterized. This was a fantasy in the sense that another interpretation might suggest this discussion was not confrontational, but rather the new CEO expressing a justifiable observation about an organization he had been recruited to lead. There is fantasy, too, in the vignette in 4.3.1 in which my text focuses on the new recruit initiation ceremony. My text presents this event as a duel between the public and private sectors, as did my account in the vignette in 4.2.3 regarding Simon's tax bill in which I suggested that this was Simon exercising power over me, as opposed to what could be implied was a story of legitimate probity. Throughout all these vignettes I use fantasy to create confrontational stories that support my sense of conflict about the organization's identities and aid the central tenet of this thesis: that participants use their understandings of organizational identities as exercises in power.

So why did I deploy elements of fantasy to construct stories and vignettes within this thesis? A practical reason is that fantasy 'improves' the quality of a story and allows

the predilections in my attitude toward PADA's identities to be emphasized: creating a caricature of characteristics of the story I want my reader most to engage with. Additionally, fantasies helped to reveal the anxieties I felt within the organization. Most notably, and woven through the series of vignettes, is the conflict I felt given the private sector cohort's overriding desire to delegitimize the public sector's view of PADA's key characteristics. It was through conflict that my sense of inferiority of being from the public sector was most keenly observed. Additionally, a substantial theme within many vignettes is what Gabriel (2000) refers to as stories where fantasies are created by subordinates about leaders, suggesting 'the leader [is] ... an impostor, someone who usurped power and whose claims are fraudulent' (p.212). This fantasy seems endemic within my vignettes, where in jokes I fantasize about leaders as I sought to present conceptions of the organization different from my own and represent theirs as far-reached and unreal.

8.4.2 A statement of hubris

In ancient Greece hubris was considered a crime, often relating to sexual exploitation, but also to narratives that offended, humiliated or shamed a victim for the gratification of the perpetrator. Today the word tends to refer to self-arrogance and extreme pride, an over-estimation of one's competence or capability, especially when someone is in a position of power (such as that held by an author). In this section, I describe how my text suggests hubristic understandings of PADA's identities: I highlight why my text deludes. I discuss how my text victimizes others' conceptions of PADA's identities and how it deludes it.

I devoted significant space in this thesis to two individuals within PADA: Simon, my boss, and Tim, the CEO and Simon's boss. Both, clearly, had control over the work I undertook within PADA and had a significant influence over the direction of the organization, including what was accepted as legitimate narratives about its identities. Throughout the thesis I suggest that Tim's and Simon's control and positions in PADA enabled them to dominate understandings of the organization's identities. While many participants I interviewed suggested this was the case, both men's influence was considerable and because of this, one reading of my text would suggest I have victimized them in writing this thesis. As I have noted, this was not because my relationship with them was poor at work – far from it. I would categorize these relationships as productive and mutually respectful. However, it is within the vignettes that this victimization, I suggest, can be most clearly observed. I wrote stories regarding Simon's tax bill and suggested the episode was really an exercise in power over me. In other vignettes, I victimize Tim, such as that in 3.3.1 when I first met him in the lift on his second day in the role and immediately reacted against his thoughts about the organization's future. In these stories I portray both men as using their power to influence negatively others' understandings of the organization's identities and then present this as causing distress and conflict within the organization, I made them 'villains' in my story and by doing so victimize them, although this may be motivated by a need to render their authority as less palpable (Dwyer 1991).

So why did I deploy this aspect of hubris in my text? Of course, the most obvious reason is that I resented both men's influence over the debates about whether PADA was best characterized a public or private sector organization. Here they seemed, in my mind, to control the debate which, as I have noted elsewhere, was important to me

personally. Clearly their power within the organization had its impact upon me too. It was through this that they had the ability to control the collective's narrative about the organization's identities. It was for these reasons that at least one reading would be that I victimized them to resist their narratives that were articulated in the organization years ago in a thesis that would remain 'fixed' as a written record.

Another characteristic of hubris is delusion concerning one's own capabilities and thoughts. Throughout my thesis I have placed my own understanding of PADA's identities above others. This, of course, is an example of delusion: my text suggests my self-importance within the organization. While I was a senior manager within PADA, I was not on the executive team. Why did I think my opinion counted more than others? My views and opinions dominate this thesis to such an extent that inevitably I believe others' voices are rarely heard within this text (an irony given that is putatively one important characteristic of a social researcher). But my text centres on my understandings of the organization's identities and influenced the way I have contextualized others' views. This, I suggest, is an act of delusion too, hubristic in the sense that my understanding can only ever be a single reading.

8.4.3 A statement of love

Sims (2004) employs the children's story of the velveteen rabbit to argue that organizations come to life, become real, when they are loved. The tale (Williams 1922) is about a boy who receives a toy rabbit for Christmas and while initially shunning it in favour of other toys, eventually brings it to life as he grows to love it. Sims' article resonates deeply with me for two reasons. The first is that I recall the story from my childhood with fondness and co-incidentally read and retold it in

adulthood recently with even greater affection. The second is that it resonates with me for the same reasons it seems to for Sims (2004) as he remarks: ‘the idea that people can bring an organization to life by loving it convinces me far more ... the idea has narrative truth and sense-making power’ (p.211). This section discusses my thesis as a statement of love for PADA and describes how it became real for me as a result of my love for it.

As I have highlighted in this thesis, my career has exclusively been within the public sector, working mainly for the DWP. As I have described, PADA was created by this organization as an independent delivery authority. Given my desire to write a research degree on processes of organization, the DWP would have offered a far greater experience from which I could have drawn than PADA. And yet it was PADA, rather than the DWP, that I chose to use as the case study for my research because I played a role in creating it and in time began to love it. Predominantly, this was because I had been one of only a handful of people who had established the project, which eventually led to the creation of the organization. PADA was an organization which I had ‘brought into existence’, so to speak, and that I wanted to succeed in its public policy aims and ambitions. To write about it was a way of securing my love for the organization, a way of preserving PADA for prosperity.

Another testament of my love for the organization is expressed as a thread that weaves throughout the text of my analysis. One key theme in these chapters is how participants articulated conflicting understandings of PADA’s identities in order to legitimize their positions. I present this conflict predominantly, however, as being between individuals within the organization and do not represent conflict as endemic

within the organization itself: I seek to preserve for the reader PADA's coherence. This, I would argue, is a statement of my love for the organization. PADA, in my mind, is an entity for me that needed to be preserved.

Additionally, many of the vignettes I include in the thesis were stories born from my love of the organization. The vignettes outlined in section 7.4 at the directorate away day are a good example of this. Throughout these, I wrote about what I believed was central, distinctive and enduring about PADA; this is a different format, of course, than I had presented during the event. For the thesis I wanted to write something that extolled the virtues of this organization, noting its positive characteristics and to relive the experience of giving the presentation in my writing to preserve it.

Throughout this reading I used the notions of fantasy, hubris and love to offer an auto-ethnographic reading of my data. Through these notions I have suggested that some of my text was a work of fantasy, a statement of my hubris (particularly towards others), and as a statement of my love for the organization. These three notions are clearly different and in essence, for me, are suggestive of my relationship with PADA, an organization that I wanted to protect and preserve in my memory and that has remained so real for me even after leaving it two years ago.

8.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I offered interpretations of my analysis of participants' identity-relevant narratives through three readings. In each, I explored how participants' understandings of PADA's identities were deployed as exercises in power, serving to legitimize and promote their authors. I further interpreted the material represented in

the analysis chapters and, in particular, highlighted how conflicting and idiosyncratic understandings of PADA served participants with linguistic resources through which they created power effects within the organization. In the construction of each reading I drew on my own experiences of working in PADA to explore reflexively issues of the organization's identities and expose the underlying assumptions on which my arguments were built (Holland 1999).

Collectively, the readings tell stories of participants' understandings of their organization's identities and those of my own. However, as a researcher of the organization in which I worked, the readings are as much an exploration of my own understandings of PADA's identities as they are a record of those of others. In writing interpretations of understandings, I recognize I have created my reality of PADA's identities and as a set of historical narratives '[endow] sets of past events with meanings ... by exploiting the metaphorical similarities between sets of real events and the conventional structures of our fictions' (White 1978, p.91). Additionally, I recognize the readings are merely one interpretation of many that I could have recorded. Indeed, while I tried to represent the voices of many participants, ultimately, I contend, the text is a presentation of my voice and its understandings of PADA's characteristics. The thesis is an exploration of me and my understandings of others' understandings, albeit, as Hertz (1997) suggests, 'understanding the self in fieldwork releases us from the epistemological tension between unreflexive positions, on the one hand, and navel gazing on the other' (p.18). What I revealed are not only the participants' conflicting understandings of PADA's identities I recorded, but also my own. That noted, from my analysis and discussion it seems clear that all

participants' understandings of identity in PADA were highly reflexive and idiosyncratic: no two characterizations were the same.

Each of the readings describes how I interpreted conceptualizations of PADA's identities by others and these interpretations were used as exercises in power that created power effects within the organization. I suggest participants used their understandings of the organization's identities to promote their own understandings of PADA, to resist others, legitimize their position within the organization, defend against anxiety, and create a sense of mystery in the organization. Participants achieved this through a variety of mechanisms, such as in the drama of organizational events and blending the past with the future into configured narratives for the present which aided their immediate ambitions (Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003). The resulting narratives were used as a dialogical resource to argue for their conception of PADA's desired characteristics and were a means by which power was exercised within the organization.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

A great mauve flower was rising towards the sky; it was the night.

(Sartre 1945, p.163)

9.1 Introduction

This chapter records my concluding thoughts. In the first of four sections I reflect on difficulties encountered while writing my thesis, I identify the inherent predilections in my text and describe what I learnt from studying PADA's identities. The second section outlines the contribution of my research to organizational identity scholarship, which I follow with ideas for future research that others may explore. I close with a vignette, highlighting my feelings as I concluded my research: as Giddens (1991) puts it, '[a] person's identity is ... in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going ... [Individuals] must continually integrate events which occur in the external world and sort them into an ongoing "story about the self"' (p.54).

9.2 Reflections on researching PADA's identities

This section reflects on how I constructed my thesis and research. Ely *et al.* (1991) make the point that the 'process of reflexivity is an attempt to identify, do something about and acknowledge the limitations of the research ... and how accounts recognize that the construction of knowledge takes place in the world and not apart from it' (p.179). Here, I reflect upon my research within the world in which it was undertaken, highlight what I learnt from the experience and how the study of others' understandings of PADA's identities led me to understand more about my own. The section is divided into two parts: in the first, I discuss the problems that arose during

stages of the research; in the second, I explore further the predilections evident in my research and describe what I have learned from my experience of researching PADA's identities.

Issues arising throughout the research

In this section, I outline my concerns while undertaking the research: I discuss personal issues and practical constraints I had to overcome while conducting my study. The most significant personal difficulty I faced while conducting the project was trying to balance my role as a researcher of an organization with my role within it (Boyce 1996). I set out to capture participants' understandings of PADA's identities, but as I went through each of the stages of the research this became progressively more difficult. This was partly because reflecting on others' understandings of an organization when you are part of it is challenging; empathizing with others became increasingly more difficult when, as an employee of PADA, I was influencing or resisting what was being articulated by others (Vince 2002b). My quest to give 'voice' to others in my research, ultimately, was overtaken by a desire to explore my own understandings of PADA's identities in relation to those of others, that is I spent time relating what concerned me, either in agreement or not with the comments of others.

Further problems arose from a failure of omnipresence. Every conversation or event I record in my thesis involved me. However, there were obviously many other conversations that participants in my study had about PADA's identities. While this was not a problem of access (as I had been given free rein to write about what I wanted) it did represent the problem that my reflections and inherent predilections

pervade the text of this thesis: I suggest my exploration of PADA's identities became a journey to reflect more on my own.

I also encountered constraints with the interviews. While no-one I asked refused to be interviewed, I was conscious that I held a senior and permanent position within the organization. This presented two problems: the first was that I felt at times junior members of staff were concerned about telling me stories of resistance in fear that I would tell others (even though I had made a personal commitment that this would not be the case); secondly, consultants and contractors were perhaps worried that if they told stories that diverged from accepted narratives 'of the day' about PADA's characteristics, that they would lose their jobs. While I suspected this was the case at times, it was interesting to observe how these two cohorts 'off-set' these concerns and relayed 'official' stories about the organization. Additionally, the interviews were conducted over a fairly lengthy period of time. While this allowed me to gain an understanding of how cohorts' views changed over the year of my research, it did not afford an opportunity to conceive how individuals' personal views changed: what made people change their minds and conceptions about the organization's identities? This was a preserve of my own identity-relevant narratives and not others.

Practically – and this is no doubt the same as with all PhD students who undertake their studies part-time – was the problem of juggling research with a full-time role, family life and the 'rest of what life throws at you'. There were times that the pressures of work meant study 'took a back seat' and when work suffered too.

Identification of predilections in my study

Rosen (1991) makes the point that ethnographers study others in order to find out more about themselves. In this section I discuss the predilections inherent in my text that influenced what I have written in this thesis. My text commits significant space to whether participants considered PADA was a private sector or public sector organization. While I believe firmly this was justified, given it was a substantial topic that participants' drew upon to describe PADA's characteristics, this is also a topic that I have debated and fought with myself. On the one hand, as a career civil servant, I am proud of working in the public sector. It has provided me with a profession, paid for academic qualifications and satisfied a need for public service, but on the other hand, I have often been told that 'public' is less good than 'private': one only has to read certain quarters of the press to sense this. This is, of course, an example of discursive hegemony, but one in which I believe: I compromise myself in order to work in the sector I do. Given this, the voice I have engaged with most is that of the public sector, I have sided with this cohort's perception of PADA (favoured it) over what I portrayed as a private sector 'take-over'.

On reflection, my experience of PADA represented a step change in my career. It was a complex programme and a difficult commercial agreement that I was responsible for bringing to conclusion. Studying for a research degree at the same time presented a huge challenge to me (and twenty years ago when I entered the world of work I would never have thought my career would lead me to undertaking a PhD). This had a bearing on what I have written about in this thesis. I have focused on the challenges PADA faced and represented these as won or lost (mainly won), challenges in the success of which I played a part.

Reading through my analysis many times identified my predilection regarding issues of conflict too. I represent it within the thesis as a negative factor: that conflicting views about PADA's identities were something of note to write about, as well as detrimental to the organization's goals. Another reading might suggest that conflicting understandings are positive or progressive for an organization. How can participants really understand the organization in which they work if they don't question or iterate understandings?

Finally, there is a strong predilection in this thesis in terms of my search to understand how I belong within organizations and my need to do so. Throughout my research it became clear that people enjoyed talking about identity, as, of course, do I. This seemed more than just an interest, more a need to feel as if they belong – and an innate need to do so. Organizations, and PADA was no different, are often anxious places in my experience and discussions and thoughts on identity serve to help people understand their own identity in relation to their organizations.

9.3 Contributions of the research

My thesis contributes principally to the empirical study of organizational identity but there are also contributions to the methods of identity research and to the management of public sector organizations. Specifically, my research seeks to contribute to knowledge of (i) interpretive research that analyses organizational identity-relevant narratives as exercises in power, (ii) reflexive studies of organizational identity, and (iii) research and management of public sector organizations. These are discussed below.

9.3.1 Empirical contribution

Few studies explore how identity-relevant narratives, authored by members of an organization, are deployed as exercises in power (e.g. Brown *et al.* 2005; Chreim 2007; Humphreys & Brown 2002a; Primo 2005), i.e. the task of my inquiry. While many scholars have researched organizations as sites of power (e.g. Clegg *et al.* 2006; Jermier *et al.* 1994; Mumby 1987; Pfeffer 1981) and the field of organizational identity is now firmly established as a part of the management research canon, there is only limited theorization and empirical exploration of the intersection of these literatures. One theoretical example is Brown's (2006) framework, which I used as the basis of my analysis in chapter 5. At the heart of this model is the assertion that not only can identity-relevant narratives be analysed using notions of reflexivity, voice, plurivocity, temporality and fictionality, but that woven through each is that such narratives are 'suffused with power' (Brown 2006, p.732). My research seeks to add to this literature by applying identity-relevant narrative data to this model in a way not done previously and, secondly, use the output from this analysis to assess the extent to which narratives were used as power effects (Foucault 1970). I argued in chapter 8 that many identity narratives captured in PADA were used as mechanisms of power and that these were created to promote the ambitions of their authors.

9.3.2 Methodological contributions

I believe my research also contributes to the literature on organizational identity in terms of the methodology of my study: a reflexively constructed ethnography. While there is a vast and diverse field of organizational ethnography and auto-ethnographic research (see Neyland 2007 for a substantive overview; Van Maanen 1979a), relatively few (e.g. Coffey 1999; Harrison 2000) have been undertaken focusing on

identity issues and I found no examples of identity-focused ethnography specifically undertaken within the perspective in which I was able to conduct my study, namely as a researcher and employee of the organization. This offered a unique perspective to explore PADA's identities, not only as an observer (e.g. Boje 1991a; Rosen 1995) embedded in an organization, but from within the 'lived textuality' (Denzin 1995, p.9) of my daily routine in the organization. While this was a privileged position for any human relations researcher given the ready access I had to participants and sensitive meetings, it also opened windows through which to observe the predilections in my own understandings of PADA's identities and how these related to those of others (Boyce 1995). Specifically, therefore, I contribute to the literature on organizational identity by writing a reflexive ethnography from the perspective of both the researcher and the researched.

9.3.3 Practical contributions

Albeit subservient to my desire to contribute to the organizational identity literature, I believe my thesis has practical offerings for the management of public sector organizations. PADA was one of only two delivery authorities created by the last Government³⁹. These were organizations that resided in the public sector but had putatively 'private sector' freedoms to deliver single complex projects. Neither PADA, nor the other delivery organization, has been studied as a research case study and I believe my research offers an insight into the cultural issues inherent in their creation and operation. Much of my work focused on the conflicting narratives between participants from the private sector and how they interacted with those, like mine, from the public sector. How this relationship changed over time, I believe, is a

³⁹ The other is the more familiar Olympics Delivery Authority (ODA).

story from which practitioners may seek to learn: conflicting understandings about PADA's identities was one significant struggle within the organization (Fleming & Spicer 2006) that over time was won by some in the organization (and lost by others). Why this was so and its effect will become an increasingly pertinent lesson over the following years as public sector organizations cope with their changing status as contracted-out entities⁴⁰.

Additionally, PADA was also a time-bound organization; we all knew it would exist for just three years, before it would be wound up by legislation. I have not yet identified research in the organizational literature that focuses on how identity and participant identification is created within such limited timescales and, therefore, my research of PADA contributes in practical terms to understandings of participants' beliefs of their organization's identity when no long-term career opportunities are obviously available.

9.4 Further research

Undertaking research within a particular paradigm and with the ambition of achieving a degree limits the extent of exploration. Throughout my research I identified ideas that I would have liked to explore, but ignored, or only briefly touched upon given the scope of my inquiry. This section highlights those avenues and details specific areas of further study others may wish to pursue. The section is divided into two: empirical

⁴⁰ See *Open Public Service*, White Paper (HMG 2011) published by the current UK Coalition Government, that suggests '[Government does] not have an ideological presumption that only one sector should run services: high-quality services can be provided by the public sector, the voluntary and community sector, or the private sector ... [T]he job of Government is not to specify which sector should deliver services to which people ... [T]hat is why we believe that wherever possible, public services should be open to a range of providers competing to offer a better service – our third principle of open public services' (p.9).

further studies and ideas for methodological innovation, the latter identified given constraints experienced while conducting my research.

9.4.1 Further empirical studies

Historical narratives in the formation of organizational identity

While drafting this thesis, I became fascinated by how participants used their understandings of PADA's past (their articulation of its history) in the construction of identity-relevant narratives (White 1978). This interest arose in the context of Ricoeur (1991) and others' (e.g. McAdams *et al.* 2006) conception of the emplotment of events in the creation of narrated identities. I believe fruitful study could be structured that specifically explores participants' historical narratives (e.g. their chronological story of the how the organization 'got to the present') and investigate these stories to generate identity-relevant data. As White (1978) argues, 'properly understood, histories ought never to be read as unanimous signs of the events they report, but rather as symbolic structures, extended metaphors, that "liken" the events reported in them to some form with which we have already become familiar in our literary culture' (p.91). From such narratives, I suggest, researchers might understand more fully identity-relevant statements as power effects, as those events emphasized by participants provide insight into their importance in the construction of individual participant's understandings of the organization's identities. Historical narratives' 'success in endowing sets of past events with meaning ... [is achieved] by exploiting the metaphorical similarities between sets of real events and those conventional structures of our fictions' (White 1978, p.91).

Performative and non-performative responses to identity statements

A facet of my study that increasingly interested me was the performative nature of identity in organization (which I briefly discussed in 8.3.3): identity was performed in PADA and served in performances of participants in the organization. I think research that explores differences in character between performative and non-performative identity-relevant narratives by groups and individuals in organizations would be fruitful, as would exploration of how different contexts (e.g. large/small audience; internal/external stakeholders) of identity-relevant statements are authored affect others' understandings of them.

Micro-development of understandings of organizational identities

I found the size of PADA a constraining factor, at times, in achieving a deeper understanding of it. While in the context of the wider public sector, PADA would be considered a small organization (just a few hundred people), in the context of the study I found giving a voice to all levels and categories of participants in the organization challenging. I think it could prove beneficial for researchers to explore smaller units within organizations to investigate identity-relevant narratives. For example, in chapter 7 I discussed my relationship with my boss and described my changing understanding of PADA's identities given the dynamics of power in our relationship. I found this unit of analysis intriguing (in part, because I was a subject within it) as I felt it enabled me to offer a more reflexive approach than discussions involving many participants' voices. I think research focusing on micro units, such as two people or small groups of peoples' relational interactions over a longitudinal study, may provide deeper insights into the construction of organizational identity that might be hidden in studies of larger numbers of organizational members.

9.4.2 Methodological innovations

I experienced limitations in my study due to the methodological choices I made. These were particularly evident in the use of interviews as a primary way of collecting narrative data. Inevitably, my position as a senior manager in the organization impacted on the narratives participants authored to me in the interviews. I believe researchers should seek more innovative ways to capture identity-relevant narratives in their research. Methods to explore, I suggest, are where participants record their understandings of an organization's identity using a 'video diary' (i.e. free of the burden of the researcher) and at times when they 'feel' they have something pertinent to say, rather than during an interview which is pitched at a set point in time when work and life might just be too much in the way. I found the data I collected at organizational events (as in chapter 6) fruitful as these provided a focus for identity statements. Identity researchers might consider focusing on an event specifically and both record and then question participants to obtain understandings of it for identity-relevant material. In sum, finding methodologies and methods that allow understandings of organizational identity understandings in a 'snap-shot' of time I believe would be an interesting basis for empirical study.

9.5 Vignette: Thoughts on returning

I completed the draft of my thesis while at 'work' in Whitehall. As I tidied the manuscript away, I decided to go for a walk.

Ten minutes later, I found myself at the National Gallery, hunting again for the painting that had inspired me to undertake this research⁴¹: I wanted to see it and reflect on my journey of writing the thesis.

Irritatingly, since my last visit, the gallery had replaced the couch that faced the painting with a wooden pew: viewing the painting's narratives now was no comfortable affair, more a labour of love.

⁴¹ See vignette: Bacchus and Ariadne in 3.3.1.

One of the stories in the painting is Theseus' departure – his ship, depicted in the distance, sails him to Athens. Theseus, triumphant, is leaving for home, having 'liaised' with Ariadne after slaying the minotaur. Ariadne is distraught. Over the years of writing my thesis I had become intrigued by the story and the paradox of the Ship of Theseus. This holds that after his death the ship was preserved by the Athenians. Over time, the planks decayed and were replaced until the materials of the vessel had all changed. Was the ship still that of Theseus or not? Philosophers had mused over the point and so had I⁴².

So, what were my thoughts at the gallery?

Of course, to me, the Ship of Theseus was a linguistic construct, created in narratives I had read and soliloquized. In this sense, the ship was like mine and others' understandings of PADA's identities: co-created and recreated by the narratives in my thesis. My understanding of the ship was unique, only mine and while 'describable' in words, ultimately impenetrable to others: understandings of identity belong to individuals.

The word 'belonged' resonated with me ... and I began to daydream ... when I 'woke', a woman was sitting next to me on the bench and we talked about the painting, its meanings and about other things too. The word 'belong' came more powerfully to me than before, as we discussed whether identity statements about an organization were actually utterances motivated by the need to 'belong' and whether this, in turn, was what made them power-laden: the need to belong being innate to my human condition. Was this actually why I wrote a thesis on identity in PADA? To codify an understanding of my narrated identity?

After some moments of silence in our conversation, I turned and observed my companion walking out of the gallery through the double doors; anxious about missing work, I got up and followed.

⁴² See Plutarch (AD 46–120, 1914) for a story of Theseus' ship. Also see Wiggins (1967) and Scaltsas (1980) for discussion of this paradox in relation to the literature on artefact identity, and Sider (2001) for a discussion from an analytical metaphysics perspective.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Interview questions

Introduction

“I’m Matt James and I am researching organizational identity for a PhD degree at the University of Bath: I am interested in what people say about ‘who/what PADA is as an organization’.

This is part of that research and is an informal interview – an opportunity for us to discuss PADA. I have formally asked the management team’s permission to conduct the research and this was granted on the basis that all information is kept completely confidential – which I confirm will be the case.

I’d like your permission to record our discussion, but this and its transcript will not be seen by anyone besides me (and possibly the University examiners), and will under no circumstances be shown to anyone else in PADA or the Department; although you may have a copy, if you wish. I have a set of questions to aid our discussion but, as I mentioned, I want to keep this an informal chat. I imagine the interview will last about an hour – but if it’s shorter or longer that’s fine.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Background questions about your role in PADA.

- 1.1 What is your job within PADA?
- 1.2 How long have you worked for PADA and/or in the Enabling Retirement Savings Programme?
- 1.3 What is your employment status currently?
(PADA employee/seconded civil servant/consultant/interim manager)?

2. What is central or key about PADA?

- 2.1 What does PADA need to do to be successful? What is its key role?
 - Do you think others would agree with you?
- 2.2 What is your first memory of the organization after you came to work for it?
- 2.3 If PADA had not been set up, what effect would this have had on the Programme of Work?
- 2.4 What has been the most important event in PADA’s ‘life’ since it was set up and why?

3. What is distinctive about PADA?

- 3.1 From your early perceptions of the organization, imagine that PADA is a board game. Which would it be and why?
- Would your choice of game be different now?
- 3.2 From your experience of the organization, what are the key differences between it and others you have worked in?
- 3.3 Describe how your daily routines at PADA are different from other organizations you have worked in recently.
- 3.4 Have you attended a meeting recently with an organization external to PADA (such as the DWP, a lobby group, or potential supplier). Describe how you think PADA is perceived by this organization.

4. What is (or what will be) enduring about PADA?

- 4.1 Can you describe what you think has remained constant about PADA during your time within the organization?
- 4.2 What do you think your boss or somebody on the executive team would say were the enduring characteristics of the organization?
- 4.3 Describe how you explain your role within PADA to others outside the organization, either in a work or social context?
- Over time, how has this description changed?
- 4.4 If PADA were a type of journey (e.g. a cruise, a walk in the countryside, a ride on a donkey) what would it be and why?

5. How power is exercised within the organization.

- 5.1 With reference to a specific issue or event, what tends to happen when something goes wrong?
- 5.2 Describe how decisions are taken in PADA.
- 5.3 Do you consider that there is a lot of ‘office politics’ going within the organization?
- What is the consequence of this to how you go about your work?
- 5.4 I would like us to discuss how you think power is exercised in the organization. With reference to a specific incident:
- How do you think power was exercised?

- Whose interests did it serve?
 - What was said during the incident? How was it said?
 - What was your role in this incident?
- 5.5 Who or what has most control over what you do and how you do it?
- Has this changed over the time you have been with the organization?
- 5.6 Do you think that your colleagues always speak their mind? Have you experienced occasions when you have resisted doing something? If so, describe what was said or done to resist the issue.

That is now the end of the interview. Would you like to add anything to what you said?

Appendix 2 Index of interview transcripts

No.	Name/job type	Level ⁴³	Date	Location	Length
1	Naomi Marketing Manager	M	28.08.08	2 nd Floor, 217, St. Dunstan's House, London	45.37
2	Lynn Communications Manager	M	09.09.08	2 nd Floor, 217, St. Dunstan's House, London	46.17
3	Liz Marketing Manager	J	11.09.08	2 nd Floor, 217, St. Dunstan's House, London	26.18
4	Sheer Head of Investment	S	16.09.08	1 st Floor, Sheer's Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	41.32
5	John Commercial Manager	J	18.09.08	4 th Floor, Innovation Room, St. Dunstan's House, London	29.30
6	Zoe Funding Manager	M	24.09.08	1 st Floor, Sheer's Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	30.45
7	Toby Analyst	M	08.10.08	4 th Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	36.38
8	Rebecca Funding Officer	J	15.10.08	4 th Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	27.05
9	Claire Requirements Manager	S	20.10.08	2 nd Floor office, Quarry House, Leeds	36.22
10	Sharon Policy Advisor	S	20.10.08	Sharon's office 4 th Floor, Quarry House, Leeds	41.43
11	Paul Investment Manager	M	28.10.08	4 th Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	31.49
12	Dave Requirements Manager	J	03.11.08	4 th Floor office, Quarry House, Leeds	36.05
13	Caroline Secretary	J	06.11.08	4 th Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	18.49
14	Helen Director of Policy	S	10.11.08	2 nd Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	33.43
15	Paul Investment Academic on secondment	M	11.11.08	4 th Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	31.17
16	Jack Requirements Officer	J	13.11.08	4 th Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	38.45
17	Ian Head of Requirements	S	13.11.08	4 th Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	29.58
18	Kate Secretary	J	28.11.08	3 rd Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	27.56
19	Adrian Consultant	M	03.12.08	3 rd Floor Library, St. Dunstan's House, London	29.50
20	Sam Head of Funding	S	09.12.08	1 st Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	26.37
21	H Funding Manager	J	09.12.08	1 st Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	29.37
22	Julie Secretary	J	15.12.08	4 th Floor office, Quarry House, Leeds	30.45
23	Simon Director of Delivery	S	16.12.08	3 rd Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	33.58

⁴³ J refers to a junior manager; M to a middle manager; S to a senior manager.

No.	Name/job type	Level	Date	Location	Length
24	James Secretary	M	18.12.08	3 rd Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	24.29
25	James Commercial Manager	J	08.01.09	4 th Floor meeting room, St. Dunstan's House, London	25.26
26	Mick Consultant	M	21.01.09	4 th Floor meeting room, St. Dunstan's House, London	41.58
27	Stephane Consultant	M	05.02.09	4 th Floor meeting room, St. Dunstan's House, London	40.56
28	Neil Consultant	M	22.02.09	4 th Floor meeting room, St. Dunstan's House, London	35.56
29	Gavin Consultant – Requirements	M	26.02.09	4 th Floor meeting room, St. Dunstan's House, London	41.30
30	Chris IT Manager	M	04.03.09	4 th Floor meeting room, St. Dunstan's House, London	39.59
31	Richard Consultant	M	10.03.09	4 th Floor meeting room, St. Dunstan's House, London	53.07
32*	Emma Director of HR	S	17.03.09	Ground Floor Conference Room, St. Dunstan's House, London	46.05
33*	Nadine Legal Consultant	M	19.03.09	4 th Floor meeting room, St. Dunstan's House, London	41.56
34	Mark Director of Investment	S	01.04.09	1 st Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	35.59
35	Angela HR Manager	M	07.04.09	3 rd Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	33.23
36	Antonella HR Manager	J	29.04.09	3 rd Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	30.33
37	Rupert Commercial Manager	J	30.04.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	37.56
38	Dan Head of Trustee Corporation	M	30.04.09	2nd Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	41.45
39	Janet Commercial Manager	M	05.05.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	45.32
40	Heather PR Manager	M	12.05.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	25.23
41	Will Consultant	M	15.05.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	35.14
42	John Finance Director	S	18.05.09	3 rd Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	38.50
43	Simon Requirements Manager	M	18.05.09	4 th Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	27.01
44	Simon Consultant – planning	M	20.05.09	4 th Floor office, St. Dunstan's House, London	30.05
45	David Funding Manager	M	21.05.09	4 th Floor Office St. Dunstan's House, London	35.56
46	Nick Head of Planning	S	03.06.09	3 rd Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	48.15

* Four interviews marked with * have been lost due to technical reasons. No transcriptions or recordings survive.

No.	Name/job type	Level	Date	Location	Length
47	Will Communications Manager	M	03.06.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	38.27
48	Rebekah Legal consultant	M	03.06.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	29.30
49	Lindsay Secretary	J	04.06.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	35.23
50	Janine Communications Manager	J	04.06.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	29.01
51	Richard Legal consultant	M	17.06.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	41.45
52	Paul Executive aide	M	23.06.09	1 st Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	35.23
53	Andy Commercial Manager	M	24.06.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	37.58
54	Joanne Commercial Manager	M	24.06.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	31.01
55	Ed Consultant	M	30.06.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	33.45
56	Alasdair Requirements team	J	08.07.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	35.12
57	Jodie Office junior	J	09.07.09	4 th Floor Office, St. Dunstan's House, London	29.01
58*	Helen, Sam, Sharon, Corinne Director of Policy, Chief of Staff, Senior Policy Advisor, Senior Analyst	S	27.04.10	Helen's Flat, London	50.04
59*	Simon Director of Delivery	S	28.04.10	Simon's office, 3 rd Floor, St. Dunstan's House	21.56
60	Tim Chief Executive Officer	S	30.04.10	Tim's office, 3 rd Floor, St. Dunstan's House	31.33

Appendix 3 Participants and organizations mentioned throughout Chapter 4

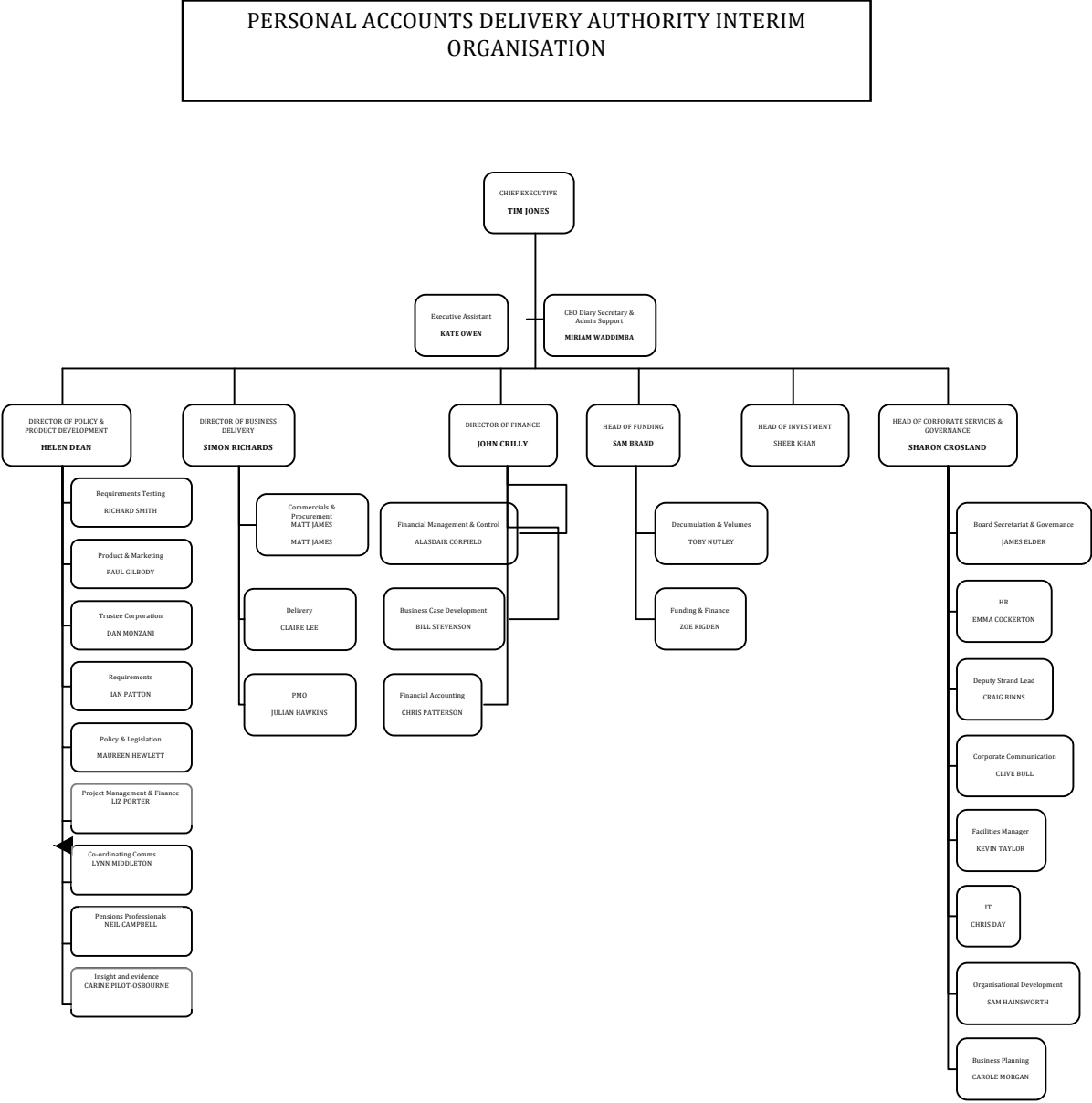
Participants mentioned throughout Chapter 4

Participant's name	Role and responsibility
Helen	A participant in my study. Policy Director of PADA.
Sam	A participant in my study. Chief of Staff in PADA (CEO's aid)
Simon	A participant in my study. Implementation Director of PADA.
Tim	A participant in my study. Chief Executive Officer of PADA.
Tony Blair	UK Prime Minister who set up the Pension Commission.
Gordon Brown	Chancellor of the Exchequer during the Pension Commission's work. Later UK Prime Minister.
Adair Turner	Chair of the Pension Commission originating PADA.
Jeannie Drake	A union leader and member of the Pension Commission. Later acting chair of PADA.
Sir Leigh Lewis	Permanent Secretary of the DWP.
Sir Paul Myners	First chair of PADA. Now Lord Myners.
Professor John Hills	An academic and member of the Pension Commission.
Phil Wynn-Owen	A senior civil servant: Director General of Pensions Reform in the DWP.
Caroline Rookes	A senior civil servant: Director of Private Pension Reform in the DWP.

Organizations mentioned throughout Chapter 4

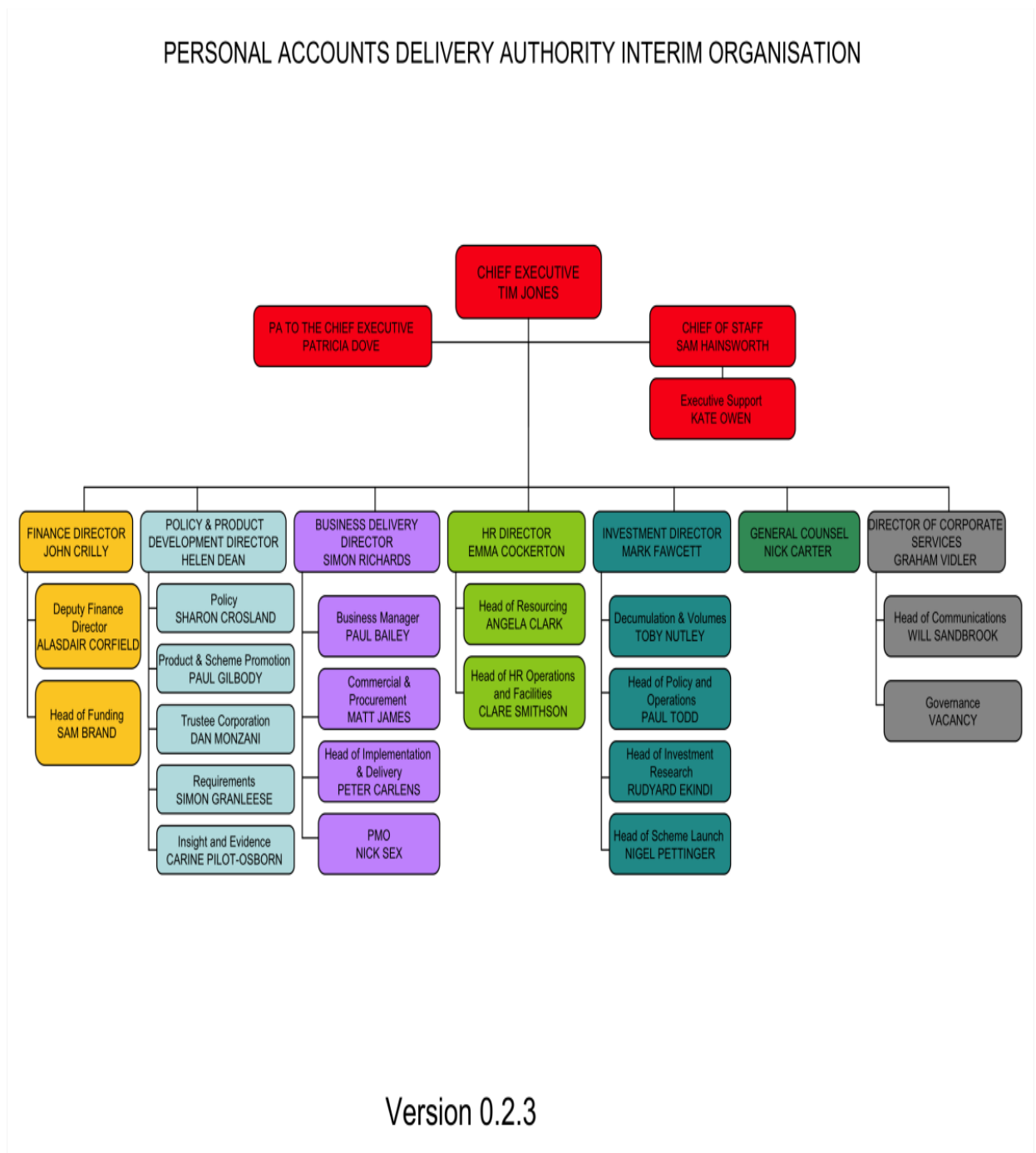
Organization's name	Abbreviation	Role and responsibility
Enabling Retirement Savings Programme	ERSP	A programme in DWP for private pension reform encompassing PADA, TRP and DWP work streams.
Department for Work and Pensions	DWP	A department of Government responsible for policy development of private pension reform.
The Pensions Regulator	TPR	An executive agency of DWP, responsible for auto-enrolment.
Major Projects Review Group	MPRG	A team within HM Treasury responsible for assuring major projects in Government.
The Trustee Corporate	-	The successor body to PADA. Now names the National Employer Savings Trust (NEST)

Appendix 4 Organizational Chart I (Facsimile)⁴⁴




⁴⁴ First published by PADA in August 2008

Appendix 5 Organizational Chart II (Facsimile)⁴⁵



⁴⁵ First published in May 2009.

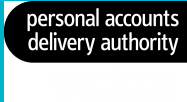
Appendix 6 Presentation on 27 April 2010




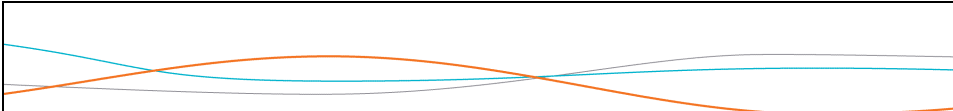
Reflections on working for PADA

Matt James

27 April 2010

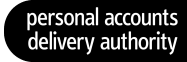


Slide 1 Photograph of my Great Auntie Vera with my son



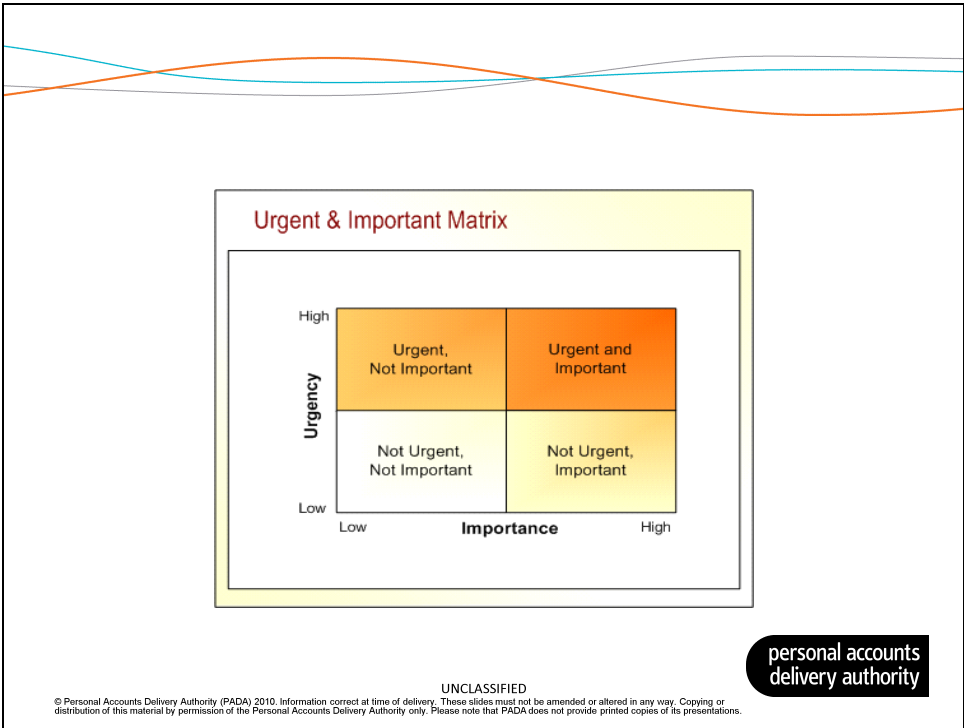
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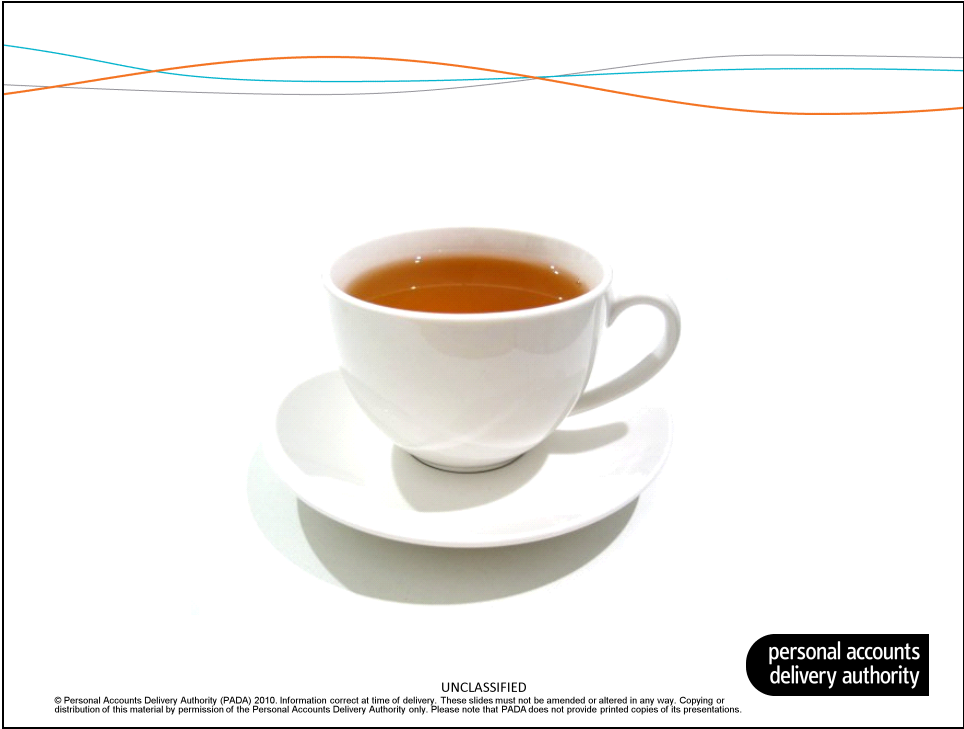


Appendix 6 Presentation on 27 April 2010 (continued)

Slide 2 A ‘two-by-two’ management matrix




Slide 3 Picture of a cup of tea



Appendix 6 Presentation on 27 April 2010 (continued)

Slide 4 Picture of Buddha

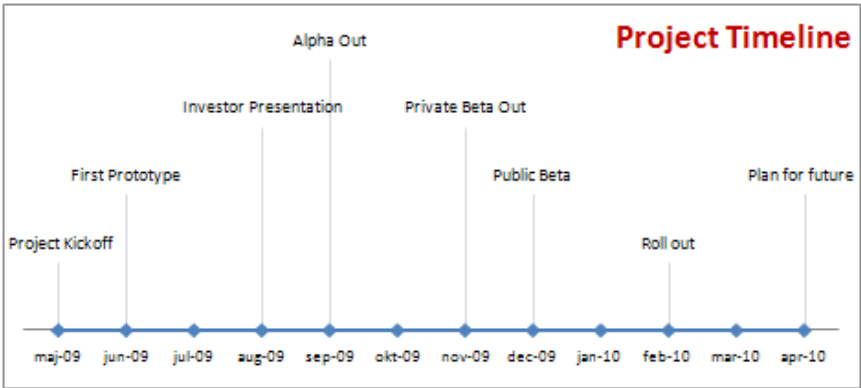


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Slide 5 A plan



Project Timeline

Project Kickoff

First Prototype

Investor Presentation

Alpha Out

Private Beta Out

Public Beta

Roll out

Plan for future

maj-09 jun-09 jul-09 aug-09 sep-09 okt-09 nov-09 dec-09 jan-10 feb-10 mar-10 apr-10

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Appendix 6 Presentation on 27 April 2010 (continued)

Slide 6 Picture of the Nobel Peace Prize Medal




A gold Nobel Peace Prize medal is centered on a dark blue background. The medal features a relief of two figures, a man and a woman, standing and holding a shield. The words "Nobel Peace Prize" are inscribed around the border of the medal.

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Slide 7 Photograph of a baby



A close-up photograph of a baby with light skin and blue eyes, lying on its stomach and propped up on its elbows. The baby is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.


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Appendix 6 Presentation on 27 April 2010 (continued)

Slide 8 Photograph of a rocket launch




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Slide 9 A dictionary definition of 'leadership'



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Plate 1 Church House, Westminster, London



Plate 2 The Assembly Hall, Church House



Plate 3 Tradesman (PADA Supplier Prospectus, p. 19)



Plate 4 St. Dunstan's House, Borough High Street, London



Plate 5 Alley beside St. Dunstan's House

